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For the solution of the 'Caste' question
Buddha is not enough
Ambedkar is not enough either
Marx is a Must

Telugu Original
Ranganayakamma

English Translation
B. R. BAPUJI

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By Ranganayakamma

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Preface

To the first Telugu edition

This is neither Buddha's biography nor Ambedkar's. Further, it is not Marx's biography either. This is a discussion concerning the 'Dalit' question based exclusively on Ambedkar's writings. However, I have confined myself only to those writings that deal with the 'Dalit' question and Caste system. Ambedkar had also discussed other issues like Division of labour, Division of Labourers, poverty, unemployment and economic exploitation. These issues are connected with the Dalit question and the Caste system. Hence all these issues find place in this book.

Ambedkar had also written on other themes like the 'Problem of the Rupee' and Large Scale Industry. But I have not included those issues which are not directly connected with the Dalit question. Even regarding Gandhi, I have not considered issues other than those Ambedkar cited in connection with the Dalit question.

For the purpose of this essay, I wanted to rely only on Ambedkar's writings. But, in couple of contexts where I could not find relevant information in Ambedkar's works, I had to turn to a few references from his biographies. I have given these details in the respective contexts.

This is, surely, a long essay. But its length is inevitable in view of the debatable issues.

Ranganayakamma★
13.10.2000

★ **RANGANAYAKAMMA** (born 1939) is a writer of novels, short-stories and essays in Telugu. She published about 60 books that include *Andhakaaramloo, Sweet Home, Jaanaki Vimukti* (all novels), *Raamaayana Vishavruksham* (a critique of Raamaayana in the form of stories), *Marx 'Capital' parichayam* and *Intipanii Baitipanii* (essays). Apart from the present book, two other books of Ranganayakamma have been translated into English: *An Introduction to Marx's 'Capital'* (in 3 volumes) and *House Work and Outside Work.*

Translator's Note

This translation is based on the third edition of the Telugu original. The original essay was first serialized in a Telugu weekly magazine, *Andhra Jyoti,* for about a year (3 December 1999-17 November 2000). It came out in the book form in November 2000, undergoing two more editions in December 2000 and January 2001.

A note on this translation is necessary since the source language, Telugu, and the receptor language, English, are *genetically* unrelated and *structurally* different. The differences in syntax (grammatical structure) and semantics (words and their meanings) of these two languages pose certain problems to a translator like me who knows English only as a second language and to a limited extent. However, I attempted to overcome these problems with the help of English language experts who went through my translation. Two persons have helped me in respect of overall language corrections (in grammar and vocabulary) without any reference to the source language text. They are: **Sudhakar Marathe**, Professor, Department of English, University of Hyderabad and **Meera Marathe**, who teaches English at Hyderabad. Both made useful corrections and suggestions to improve the quality of the translation. However I carried out those corrections and suggestions after discussing with the original authoress. I carried out almost all the grammatical and idiomatic corrections. But it was not possible to carry out some corrections concerning the style where the original writer thought such corrections might not represent her style.

Despite useful suggestions of the English language experts, the present translation may still have shortcomings due to either oversight or personal choice of the translator with regard to the suggestions made. Hence, the translator is responsible, not the language experts, for the shortcomings that may still remain.

A clarification on the quotations cited in this book is necessary. The original writer gave quotations from the Telugu translations of Ambedkar's writings (published by the Government of Andhra Pradesh). The quotations in this translation are taken from the English originals of Ambedkar's collected works (published by the Government of Maharashtra). The quotations are given in an indented form . The usual practice in English books is that quotation marks are not used when quotations are indented. However, for the sake of added clarity, we have used quotation marks along with the indented form. But, at some places, quotations are not given in indented form where they are intermittently followed by the writer's comments.

B.R.Bapuji★

★ **B.R.Bapuji** is a Professor at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad. His other translations include Ranganayakamma's *An Introduction to Marx's 'Capital'* (in 3 volumes).

For the solution of the 'Caste' question

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It was about 35 years ago that I read for the first time about Ambedkar. I don't remember at all either the title of the book or its author. By the time I finished the book, I developed a liking for Ambedkar and anger for 'Mahatma Gandhi'. I have been reading books by Ambedkar and on Ambedkar now and then. My anger for Gandhi has strengthened. With Ambedkar, there began also 'criticism' along with 'liking'. There are reasons both for agreement on certain issues and rejection of certain other issues. When there are adequate reasons, both unity and criticism co-exist.

Ambedkar's style is very easily and smoothly understandable. Nowhere is it boring except where the translation is not at all good. His books read interesting since all the issues he discussed are worth knowing and discussing.

In the beginning, I used to think that Ambedkar wrote exclusively on the 'question of caste'. But it is not so. If we examine his volumes, it will be clear that he wrote on many other issues as well. The question of 'poverty', for instance, is also among the issues that he discussed. It appears that he wrote with great patience on many things: political problems, social problems, religious problems, linguistic states, the partition of India, etc.

Of all his work, research on the Hindu religious texts occupied, one might almost say 'gobbled up', most of his time. It appears that he researched into the entire ancient Hindu religious literature—without the exception of a single letter—Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, Puranas, Smritis, Prabandhas and Kavyas. We would not realize this unless we go through all his volumes. No other expression except the 'drudgery' of the bullock drawing well-water is adequate to describe the toil that Ambedkar did for this purpose. This expression may in fact be inadequate to indicate that toil. It is such a great toil that we feel again and again: 'it is the

most futile activity to spend so much time on the dogmatic religious literature'. The patience with which a person does certain things is sometimes very necessary and laudable. But spending time on long discussion and argument on mythical stories and the prattling of the religious fools such as: 'when did 'Kaliyuga' begin? How many divisions or parts does a 'sacred thread' have? Are Brahma and Prajapati one and the same' and so on will not help to resolve any living problem. Such arguments and counter-arguments will in no way effectively influence the real lives of real people except for the relaxation and passing of time of one or two Sanskrit scholars among the millions of people in the country. But, research into Sanskrit scholarship was a matter of great interest for Ambedkar. His interest made possible for Ambedkar to perform such a heavy drudgery.

Another important aspect of Ambedkar's writings is the elaboration of Buddhism (Bouddha Dharma) with his own interpretations. Ambedkar has great reverence for Buddhism. Along with it he also harboured a great deal of opposition for Marxism. It is his deeply held belief that Buddhism is a greater theory than Marxism and that it is Buddhism that shows a real, illuminating path to human society. We find this discussion in his essays *Buddha and His Dhamma* and *Buddha or Karl Marx* and in some other contexts.

The world needs the theory that is powerful enough to illuminate the path. It is irrelevant whether that theoretician is Buddha, Marx, Ambedkar or someone else. That which remedies the disease alone is a medicine! That which emancipates from sufferings alone is the higher path. If it is Buddhism, we are obliged to follow it, to revere it. The question, however, is to ascertain which is the higher path! This is the thing, which we must ascertain. We are obliged to follow the thing which we ascertain to be the higher path.

We need to read Ambedkar's writings in order to arrive at a correct understanding of many issues which he discussed: the caste system, untouchability, poverty, Buddhism, Marxism, etc. We have to read them carefully and seriously. Whatever we read, we have to take everything that is useful. We have to follow it. We have to correct whatever needs correction. We have to abandon whatever is not useful. To do all this, however, we must first understand Ambedkar's ideas correctly.

Problems like castes and untouchability are not things that have arisen, so to speak, yesterday or today. They have been entrenched for thousands of years. But we don't have any written literature—other than religious texts and some inscriptions—that tells about them. The available sources may not be useful in many contexts. Yet they may be useful to some extent

in some contexts. When we don't find clear-cut bases for the problems, however, there is no way out except attempting to understand them by means of our own logic.

This does not mean that there were no other researchers who studied castes in India before Ambedkar. But the whole concern of our investigation here is entirely with Ambedkar; on his writings. Let us start with the 'caste question'.

1 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, HOW DID 'CASTES' ORIGINATE?

All of us know what the religious texts say about 'castes'. Their explanation is as follows: This universe was originally in a long-drawn out sleep: every thing was fully dark, invisible and impossible to grasp. Then the Holy Soul (God) assumed a manifest form out of a latent form with his own power and created the five spirits by gradually ending darkness. The creator created Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vysyas and Shudras from his face, shoulders, thighs and feet respectively. He assigned the duty of reading the Vedas and performance of yajna and yaga to Brahmins, protection of the public to Kshatriyas, animal husbandry and cultivation to Vysyas and the duty of serving the first three Varnas was assigned to Shudras. The creator made this arrangement only for the sake of the welfare of the world. This is what the religious texts say. This crazy story that God alone created castes will continue further more. It is a futile exercise to talk about it further. When religious texts say with reference to any issue thus, 'God alone created this', it is enough if we ask a single question, namely, 'Then who created that God?' With this one question, that God, those religious texts and everything will fall asunder. Therefore, in order to find out the reason for any thing in the world, we have to search social reality instead of depending on the gimmicks which a creator does 'for the sake of the welfare of the world' and only then will we obtain fruitful result.

Some people who ponder over the 'caste question' say that 'the remnants of tribes might have transformed into castes'. Some others say that 'this is perhaps a question of division of labour; occupations themselves might have led to castes'. Many people are inclined toward the second opinion. There are, however, people who do not agree with this. Ambedkar too does not agree with this opinion. 'Don't we find division of labour in all countries? Then why did the caste system, which is absent in other countries, originate only in India?', this is how Ambedkar questions. This is, of course, a good question.

People who base their argument on the division of labour again say thus, Caste system did originate only in India because some special circumstances may have added themselves to the phenomenon of division of labour. Those special circumstances might have been absent in other countries'. But, they can't explain what those 'special circumstances' were. This argument does not conclude anything. We are left only with questions without answers.

Under these circumstances, Ambedkar declared that he had found 'the answer'. He stated that answer in his article "Castes in India", which he wrote in 1916. He reiterated it many a time in his article "The triumph of Brahminism" and in other contexts. In his first essay, "Castes in India", he explained that evil practices like Sati, girl-marriages, widowhood of women arose along with the problem of caste and that all these problems are in fact mutually interrelated.

We have to examine this explanation with a good deal of care since he claims to have discovered certain things which none had discovered until then.

Ambedkar's explanation of 'caste' begins like this:

> "I need hardly remind you of the complexity of the subject I intend to handle. Subtler minds and abler pens than mine have been brought to the task of unraveling the mysteries of Caste; but unfortunately it still remains in the domain of the ''unexplained'', not to say of the "un-understood". I am quite alive to the complex intricacies of a hoary institution like Caste, but I am not so pessimistic as to relegate it to the region of the unknowable, for I believe it can be known. Theoretically, it has defied a great many scholars who have taken upon themselves, as a labour of love, to dig into its origin... I... limit myself to... the genesis, mechanism and spread of the caste system" (Vol. 1, pp.5-6).

After this, the contents of the article proceed as follows: According to ethnologists, the population of India is a mixture of Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians and Scythians. All these stocks of people came into India from various directions and with various cultures, centuries ago, when they were in a tribal state. They all made their entry into the country by fighting with those who had come earlier than them. They settled down as peaceful neighbours after waging as many battles as they could. Through constant contact and mutual intercourse they evolved a common culture that superseded their own distinctive cultures. Thus,

> "...Caste is a parcelling of an already homogeneous unit, and the explanation of the genesis of Caste is the explanation of this process of parcelling" (Vol.1, p.6).

What exactly does caste mean? What are its characteristics? Is there any essential characteristic? For although caste has such characteristics as pursuing the same occupation hereditarily, absence of inter-dining relations between one group and another, determination of membership in a group by birth in that group, these are not primary characteristics of caste. The essential characteristic is 'marriages that take place within the same group'. According to Ambedkar, this alone is the characteristic of the caste.

> "...prohibition, or rather the absence of intermarriage —endogamy, to be concise—is the only one that can be called the essence of Caste when rightly understood" (Vol.1, p.8).
>
> "Caste in India means an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy" (Vol. 1, p.9).
>
> "...creation of Castes, so far as India is concerned, means the superposition of endogamy on exogamy...Thus the superposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste" (Vol. 1, p.9).
>
> "If a group desires to make itself endogamous a formal injunction against intermarriage with outside groups will be of no avail, especially if prior to the introduction of endogamy, exogamy had been the rule in all matrimonial relations. Again, there is a tendency in all groups lying in close contact with one another to assimilate and amalgamate, and thus consolidate into a homogeneous society. If this tendency is to be strongly counteracted in the interest of Caste formation, it is absolutely necessary to circumscribe a circle outside which people should not contract marriages" (Vol. 1, p.10).
>
> "...if we succeed in showing how endogamy is maintained, we shall practically have proved the genesis and also the mechanism of Caste" (Vol.1, p.9).

Let us express in our own words what we have observed so far. At one point of time in India's history, there existed groups of population that had become a homogeneous society. Marriages used to take place between those groups of population: from any side to any side. Let us call them inter-group marriages or 'exogamy'. However, exogamy began to transform into endogamy or intra-group marriages. The beginning of this endogamy itself is the beginning of the castes. If we understand how different groups in the population could maintain endogamy, it amounts to an understanding of the genesis of the castes—this is the point which we have observed in Ambedkar's explanation.

We have to examine this explanation much further. But, the beginning point of explanation itself is leading us to some doubts. How could that population still remain as different groups when intermarriages were taking

place without any restrictions? Could it (the population) remain so because of any other reason unconnected with marriages? Endogamy was meant to prevent the mixture of groups, wasn't it? Why were the groups not allowed to mix? For what purpose? Only if we are able to explain this will it amount to explaining the genesis of caste and not by explaining how different groups maintained endogamy. But, Ambedkar's analysis assumes that the explanation of how (instead of 'why') groups were not allowed to mix is the explanation of the genesis of castes. We have to understand this aspect properly since this is a discussion of 'the genesis of the caste'.

Ambedkar says:

> "The question of origin is always an annoying question and in the study of caste it is sadly neglected; some have connived at it, while others have dodged it. Some are puzzled as to whether there could be such a thing as the origin of caste....As for myself I do not feel puzzled by the origin of caste in India for, as I have established before, endogamy is the only characteristic of caste and when I say ***origin of caste*** I mean the ***origin of the mechanism for endogamy"*** (Vol.1, p.14).

The two last mentioned observations are not mutually consistent. In one sentence, endogamy is the cause (origin) and 'caste' is its 'effect'. If we see the matter in this manner, the two (endogamy and caste) are not identical. But in the second sentence, Ambedkar said, 'whether you speak of origin of caste or origin of the mechanism of endogamy, both mean the same'. If we see the matter from this angle, both caste and endogamy are one and the same. What should we pick up as the opinion of the writer out of these mutually inconsistent opinions?

If he says 'endogamy is the basis of caste', his claim can not amount to finding the basis of caste. Then the question arises thus, "well, then what is the basis for endogamy? Why did exogamy transform itself into endogamy?" Unless we know the answer, the problem will not be resolved.

Or, if he says that 'both caste and endogamy mean the same', then we have to discover another, a third term as basis for both these phenomena. Yet this job remains to be done. This means, we have not found the 'basis' of caste by any means. The problem will not be solved if we take endogamy as the basis. It does not amount to finding the origin of the caste.

While this is so, Ambedkar's explanation of the caste begins elsewhere with 'four Varnas'.

1) 'Four Varnas'

According to Ambedkar, the characteristics of 'four Varnas' are as follows:

> "We shall be well advised to recall at the outset that the Hindu society, in common with other societies, was composed of classes and the earliest known are the (1) Brahmins or the priestly class; (2) the Kshatriya, or the military class; (3) the Vaishya, or the merchant class and (4) the Shudra, or the artisan and menial class. Particular attention has to be paid to the fact that this was essentially a class system, in which individuals, when qualified, could change their class, and therefore classes did change their personnel" (Vol.1, p.18).

Here, 'classes' do not mean 'classes that form due to exploitation of labour'. It is a common usage in language to refer different sections of society as 'classes'. In the same sense, Ambedkar is here referring to 'Varnas' as 'classes'.

According to Ambedkar's explanation, we need to notice the following aspects of the 'four Varnas':

(1) They are not yet 'castes'. 'Castes' are not yet formed. These are simply the earliest known 'classes'.

(2) These classes have formed on the basis of occupations. All the classes have 4 different kinds of occupations. A person is a Brahmin because he pursues a 'particular occupation'. Another person is a 'Shudra' because he pursues another kind of occupation. If we keep occupations aside, it is not possible to say that "this person is a Brahmin" and "that person is a Shudra". The class of a person has formed depending on the occupation that he pursues. This means, 'occupation' is the basis for 'class'.

(3) People in these classes can change their class in any direction. If a person who remained in the Shudra class for a certain period of time can change his class into that of a Brahmin or any other provided he improves his qualification. Similarly, a person in the Brahmin class will become a member of lower class if he lowers his qualification and returns again to Brahmin class if he improves qualification!

(4) It is these four Varnas that Ambedkar meant in terms of 'groups' in India that amalgamated into a 'homogeneous society'. He referred assimilation and amalgamation of groups despite the fact that one group existed as 'priestly class' and another as 'menial class'. Further, it is in this connection with these four Varnas that he referred to exogamous marriages that occurred in either direction.

These are the points which we have to remember concerning four Varnas.

The Varnas system transforms itself into the cast system. But, according to Ambedkar, the Varna system is much superior than the caste system because an individual in a Varna system could change his Varna. Moreover, marriages take place in either direction among Varnas. Because of these two features, Varna system is superior in his opinion.

Let us first discuss the issue of changing of the population of Varnas in either direction depending on qualification. Who was supposed to decide the qualifications if people wanted to change their Varnas? What are those qualifications? How will that process proceed?

While stating that officials holding the power to make such decisions as Manu and the Saptarishis, examine all the people once in four years and decide their Varna, Ambedkar elaborates the process of change as follows:

> "That these are the stages by which Varna was converted into caste seems to have ample support from tradition as recorded in the religious literature. There is no reason why this tradition should not be accepted, as embodying something that is quite genuine. According to this tradition, the task of determining Varnas of a person was effected by a body of officers called Manu and Saptarishis. From the mass of people Manu selected those who were fit to be Kshatriyas and Vaishyas and the Saptarishis selected those who were fit to be Brahmins. After this selection was made by Manu and Saptarishis for being Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, the rest that were not selected were called Shudras. The Varnas arrangement so determined lasts for one *Yug*, i.e., a period of four years. Every fourth year a new body of officers known by the same designation Manu and Saptarishis were appointed for making a new selection. It happened that last time some of those who were left to be fit only for being Shudras were selected for being Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas while some of those who were, elected last time for being Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were left as being fit only of being Shudras. Thus the personnel of the Varna changed. It was a sort of a periodical shuffling and selection of men to take up according to their mental and physical aptitudes and occupations which were essential to the life of the community... According to ancient tradition as embodied in the Puranas the period for which the Varna of a person was fixed by Manu and Saptarishis was a period of four years and was called *Yug*. At the end of the period of four years there occurred the Manwanter whereby every fourth year the list was revised. Under the revision some changed their old Varna, some retained it, some lost it and some gained it" (Vol.3, p.286-7).

> "Manu and Saptarishis was a sort of a Board of Interview which determined the Varna of a person from how he struck them at the interview" (Vol. 3, p.287).

Thus goes on the lengthy elaboration that suggests why this system of determination of Varnas of the individuals by officers based on the qualifications is a superior system.

Well then who will select those 'officers'? What are the qualifications based on which they become 'officers'? There are no such details forthcoming.

There are inequalities also among the four Varnas. The lowest of all the Varnas is 'Shudra' Varna. Shudras are those who do not have opportunities and qualifications to pursue those occupations which upper Varnas do. How does a 'Shudra' person improve his qualifications in order to change into the Brahmin Varna? What are the qualifications due to the loss of which a Brahmin becomes a Shudra? Suppose all people have good qualifications in a given 'yug' and none would become a Shudra. What would happen then? Will four years pass without the existence of Shudras? Who would perform service for the upper Varnas during that period? Would the upper Varnas perform service for themselves? No, they won't. Only Shudras have to exist to do service forever. This means that a portion of the population has to exist as Shudras always!

Interviewing each individual and changing of Varnas by officers! Abandoning of old Varnas and adopting new Varnas by people accordingly! This means, abandoning old occupations and pursuing new ones! Changing of occupations thus every four years! What sort of theory is this?

Do we have to accept the theory if someone adopts literally the 'Puranic' stories that Brahmins became Shudras and Shudras became Brahmins and argue that 'this is what had happened in the history of the people of India in the past'?

While this was presumably so, after a lapse of time there is supposed to have occurred some change in the procedure of determining Varnas. While observing that the old procedure was crude and while praising the new procedure, Ambedkar elaborates it as follows:

> "The determination of the Varna (by Manu and Saptarishis) was done in a rough and tumble manner. This system seems to have gone into abeyance. A new system grew up in its place. It was known as the Gurukul system. The Gurukul was a school maintained by a Guru (teacher) also called Acharya (learned man). All children went to this Gurukul for their education. The period of education extended for twelve years. The child while at Gurukul was known as Brahmachari. After the period of education was over there was the Upanayan ceremony. It was a ceremony at which the Acharya determined the Varna of the student and sent him out in the world to perform the duties of that Varna. Upanayan by the Acharyas was the new method of determining Varna

> which came into vogue in place of method of determination by Manu and Saptarishi. The new method was undoubtedly superior to the old method" (Vol.3, p.287).

Why is this new procedure superior? Because it provides a person training in a Gurukul before assigning Varna. It determines the Varna after knowing the individuality of the person. Hence, it is superior:

> "...the only safe way to determine the Varna of a person is to know his individuality, the addition of this new feature was undoubtedly a great improvement" (Vol. 3, p.288).

A Gurkul distributing 'certificates of proficiency in the duties of a particular Varna'! The Guru used to confer 'degrees' on the students! This means, superior procedures such as these came into practice due to the system of Gurukul! All children in the society studying in Gurukuls! That is, including the children of Shudras! For about 12 years! 'Determination of Varna' only after the completion of the study! And in any case, after the completion of 12 years' training under great Gurus, some youth will invariably become 'Shudras'! Which means, all Shudras were those who received education for 12 years! We need to understand all this very carefully if we want to know what Ambedkar discovered about the 'genesis of castes'.

So far, we have reached his idea of the 'Gurukul' system. After determining a Varna to a student, he will remain in that Varna throughout the life instead of just for 4 years as in the old procedure. But this procedure does not make Varnas hereditary. The Varna assigned to person applies only to that person and no longer than the duration of his life. It will not apply to his offspring. This is what Ambedkar suggests at any rate:

> "With the introduction of the Acharya Gurukul system, the duration of the Varna came to be altered. Varna instead of being Varna for a period became Varna for life. But it was not hereditary" (Vol. 3, p.288).

The Varna of an individual used to last only for 4 years in the case of the procedure prior to this Gurukul system. That individual had to prove his qualification afresh again and again. But, owing to this new Gurukul system, the Varna of an individual will last unchanged throughout life if a single Varna is assigned to that individual. The person who passes through the Gurukul with a degree qualifying him to be Brahmin would remain a Brahmin throughout life. Similarly, person who receives the degree of a Shudra will remain Shudra throughout life. In the old procedure, one could get rid of Shudra Varna at least after four years. There is no such scope in the new procedure. One has to remain in the menial Varna, for instance, throughout life. In that case, isn't the new procedure more harmful than the old one? Can any Shudra person call this new procedure

"undoubtedly superior" and "undoubtedly (an) improvement"? But, Ambedkar eulogised the new procedure with such words. For him, none of the following questions arose upon reading Puranic stories relating to Gurukul: Are not these 'certificates of proficiency in the duties of a particular Varna' non-sensical? Is not the conferring of 'degrees' just as non-sensical a notion? How nonsensical is the idea of education of the children of Shudras for twelve years in Gurukul! It appears that all Ambedkar's doubts had dried up and everything had become 'doubtless' because of the miracle of Gurukul.

Will the research—which claims that Saptarishis or Gurukuls determine Varnas—have any value greater than that of fabricated or cock-and-bull stories? Of the matters that we have examined so far, is there anything worth considering as historical truth?

The Brahmin Varna could not have been satisfied despite such great assistance the Gurukul system rendered to it. For it would not obtain complete protection without Varna applying not only to an individual for his life but also to his offspring hereditarily. Hence Brahmin Varna began its attempts to achieve this further advantage:

> "To achieve this Brahminism proceeded in the most audacious manner one can think of" (Vol. 3, p.288)

What was the 'most audacious manner' in which Brahmanism proceeded? This means, it proceeded in such an audacious manner that it dared to introduce castes. What did it do? It abolished the Gurukul system. It assigned the right to perform Upanayan of the children to the father instead of to the Guru. Further, it abandoned exogamy and introduced endogamy so that relations between the Brahmin Varna and the other Varnas would cease to exist.

If Gurukul system were in practice, the Varna of the elderly Brahmins of that time would have already become fixed as Brahmin Varna. It won't change throughout their lives. But, the Varnas of children would form only after the completion of their education. There was in this the risk that the Guru might even categorize the children of Brahmins as Shudras. Then those children would remain Shudras throughout life. In order to escape from this danger, Varnas had to be assigned by birth. The Varna of the children would have to be that of their elders. For this purpose, Ambedkar argues, Brahmins had introduced endogamy and abandoned exogamy with other Varnas.

Well, what basis does Ambedkar have to say that exogamy existed among the Varnas in the first place? Only certain stories found in the religious texts. For example, Shantanu was a Kshatriya man. Ganga was

a Shudra woman. They gave birth to a son called 'Bhishma'. Parashar was a Brahmin man. Matsyagandhi was a Shudra woman. They gave birth to a son called Krishnadwaipayan. Relationships in such stories as these are, according to Ambedkar, exogamous marriages. But, can we, therefore, conclude that such relationships were marriages of the subsequent period? We find marriages and wife-husband relationships even in the religious texts. But in many stories those wives as well as husbands clearly have extra marital relations.

Wives give birth to children by means of their relations with other men even their husbands aware of liaisons. Even in the story which Ambedkar cited, of Matsyagandhi, who is a Shudra, with Shantanu who is a Kshatriya, gives birth to a son called Vichitravirya and with Parasharan, who is a Kshatriya, she brings forth a son called Krishnadwaipayana.

Do we have to conclude from these stories that a Shudra woman had different marriages: one with a Kshatriya and another with a Brahmin? Likewise, there are stories which say that Shantanu and Ganga had a son called Bhishma and Matsyagandhi brought forth to Vichitravirya. Would all these relationships also be marriages? How do we, in fact, know the nature of these relationships? Can we, based on half-known things, assume that 'marriages used to take place among all the Varnas of four-Varna system'? Ambedkar argues that we have to!

> "I have said the Varna system had nothing to do with marriage. That males and females belonging to the different Varnas could marry and did marry. Law did not come in the way of inter-Varna marriage... All marriages between Varnas—irrespective of the question whether the bride-groom was of the higher Varna and the bride of the lower Varna—were valid" (Vol.3, p.307).

For Ambedkar, the Varna system is superior because all the relations in Puranic stories are 'legitimate' and because exogamy existed among Varnas. But the information which Ambedkar himself gave shows that there were 'higher Varnas' and 'lower Varnas'. When he says, "whether bride-groom was of the higher Varna and the bride of the lower-Varna", does it not mean that there were hierarchical differences among Varnas? Even according to Ambedkar, Brahmins were attempting to be Brahmins as a higher Varna and were not willing to change to the Shudra Varna. The very observation that 'Shudra Varna exists as menial Varna' proves that there is no superiority in the Varna system.

But, according to Ambedkar, the Varna system is superior to the caste system. None of the reasons that he pointed out to explain how it is superior is convincing. While exogamy was prevalent, the process of transformation of Varnas into castes apparently occurred in the Varna system, which was

'superior' according to Ambedkar. The Brahmin Varna initiated endogamy and changed the Varna into the Brahmin caste. The remaining Varnas too imitated Brahmin Varna, initiated endogamy, and changed into castes. This is how Ambedkar puts it:

> "At sometime in the history of the Hindus, the priestly class socially detached itself from the rest of the body of people and through a closed-door policy became a caste by itself. The other classes being subject to the law of social division of labour underwent differentiation, some into large, others into very minute groups. The Vaishya and Shudra classes were the original inchoate plasm, which formed the sources of the numerous castes of today" (Vol.1, p.18).
>
> "Why did these sub-divisions or classes, if you please, industrial, religious or otherwise, become self-enclosed or endogamous? My answer is because the Brahmins were so. Endogamy or the closed-door system, was a fashion in the Hindu society, and as it had originated from the Brahmin caste it was whole-heartedly imitated by all the non-Brahmin sub-divisions or classes, who, in their turn, became endogamous castes. It is 'the infection of imitations' that caught all these sub-divisions on their onward march of differentiation and has turned them into castes" (Vol. 1, p. 18).
>
> "This sub-division of a society is quite natural. But the unnatural thing about these sub-divisions is that they have lost the open-door character of the class system and have become self-enclosed units called castes" (Vol.1, p.18).

Unrestricted open-door character of the class (=Varna) system! Even in the Varna system, all the upper castes were in a dominating position and the Shudra Varna was in menial service. Under such circumstances, how can he say that all Varnas had 'open-door character' in Varna system?

2) People had imposed Castes on themselves!

If some one says that "somebody imposed castes on people", such words would make Ambedkar very angry. He might respond thus: "Are people fools to bear it if somebody imposes them? Will they keep quite if somebody does so?"

"Neither persons like Manu nor Brahmins imposed castes on people. They themselves introduced castes whole- heatedly", argues Ambedkar. But, must one not raise the question, "why do people introduce a bad thing for themselves? Especially if they realized that they should not tolerate it?" But such a question does not occur to Ambedkar. If you can't believe this, hear his own words:

> "How did the institution of caste spread among the rest of the non-Brahmin population of the country? ... If the story that he gave the law of caste be credited, then Manu must have been a dare-devil fellow... It is unimaginable that the law of caste was *given*. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Manu could not have outlived his law, for what is that class that can submit to be degraded to the status of brutes by the pen of a man, and suffer him to raise another class to the pinnacle? ... One thing I want to impress upon you is that Manu did not *give the law* of Caste and that he could not do so. Caste existed long before Manu. He was not and could not ordain the present order of Hindu Society. His work ended with the codification of existing caste rules and the preaching of Caste *Dharma*. The spread and growth of the Caste system is too gigantic a task to be achieved by the power or cunning of an individual or of a class. Similar in argument is the theory that the Brahmins created the Caste. After what I have said regarding Manu, I need hardly say anything more, except to point out that it is incorrect in thought and malicious in intent. The Brahmins may have been guilty of many things, and I dare say they were, but the imposing of the caste system on the non-Brahmin population was beyond their mettle. They may have helped the process by their glib philosophy, but they certainly could not have pushed their scheme beyond their own confines" (Vol.1, p.15-16).

This means, neither Manu nor Brahmins introduced caste. People had introduced it for themselves. Ambedkar has already said that "it was wholeheartedly imitated by all the non-Brahmin subdivisions or classes, who, in their turn, became endogamous castes". And "Manu could not have outlived his law", said Ambedkar. This means people would have realized the treachery of that law and would have killed Manu! But, the people imposed such a treacherous law on themselves! How strange it is!

Ambedkar himself asks another question, what is that class that can submit to be degraded to the status of brutes by the pen of a man? Which means, the people do not submit to the stroke of the pen of others but would submit to the strokes of their own pens! This means that the same people, who realised that it is stupidity to accept castes if others impose on them because it would degrade them, would impose on themselves the same foolishness and the same degradation! On the one hand he asks, "will the people let live those persons who impose castes on them." On the other hand he claims that "people have introduced something that harms them!" Is this illogical argumentation aimed at proving that 'commonsense diminishes if intellect exceeds'?

If the Brahmin class disconnects its relations with other classes and prevents them to mix with it, this amounts to imposing castes on those

other classes. Similarly, if all the upper classes cease to have relations with Shudras, this amounts to imposing castes on Shudras. Then endogamy will become obligatory to Shudras.

When there are inequalities between castes, a given caste would be bound to conduct marriages within its sphere or it would desire matrimonial relations with superior castes. It would oppose relations with inferior castes at any rate. Thus, though all castes observe the caste system, it is the upper castes that are responsible for the crime of introducing castes or practising castes rigidly. This means, it amounts to the fact that upper castes have themselves imposed the caste system. Therefore, the argument that "none had wholeheartedly imposed the caste system on the people of the lower castes" is not more creditable than any childish argument.

Some individual like Manu might not have, perhaps, introduced castes. No convention (whether it is good or bad) begins from any one individual. But it does not mean that no one is responsible for it. All those who attempt to retain a convention are responsible for it. Such people ought to acquire a good reputation if it is a good thing and disrepute if it is a bad thing.

In another context, Ambedkar explains the specialty of Manusmriti (Code of Manu) as follows:

> "If Ethics and Morality are duties then there can be no doubt that Manu Smriti is a book of Ethics... Manu was the first to systematise and codify the duties to which a Hindu was bound. He distinguishes between *Varnashramadharmas* and *Sadharandharmas*. The Varnashramadharmas are the specific duties relating to one's station in life i.e. one's station as determined by one's Varna or caste and one's Ashram or particular stage of life. The Sadharandharmas are duties irrespective of one's age, caste or creed i.e. duties obligatory on man as man and not as a member of a particular community or social class or as being at a particular stage or period of life" (Vol. 3, p. 334).

This means that none had dictated earlier which caste should behave in what manner and which caste should perform what functions and it was only Manu who did that job for the first time. Doesn't this amount to introducing castes? Ambedkar elaborated on many occasions that Manusmritis dictated that Shudras should neither read nor hear Vedas; that they should not acquire property; that the tongue of a Shudra be cut and lead be poured in his ears if he engages in certain activities. If all these restrictions are laid down afresh on Shudra castes, doesn't this amount to introducing castes?

"People would not have let Manu live if he had introduced castes", Ambedkar himself says, doesn't he? People would be furious because

Manu introduced castes, wouldn't they? Won't people be furious because Manu defended the caste system and laid down new punishment for Shudras?

Manu might not be the fellow who introduced caste, yet he defended it, didn't he? Didn't Shudras let live the upper castes which ceased to have relations with Shudras? What is the use of dumping exaggerated words like "will the people let live the fellow who introduced castes?"—except that these words divert the main issue?

3) How did 'Sati' begin?

Ambedkar claims that he discovered the fact that—apart from the caste problem—problems such as 'Sati', restrictions on widows and girl-marriage (not child-marriages) cropped up due to the introduction of endogamy by the Brahmin class. His explanation, of the way in which these problems are connected with the caste system, proceeds as follows.

By endogamy we mean marriages within the caste. The number of women and the number of men in a given caste must tally. We find cases where husbands die while wives are alive and wives die while husbands are alive. If a wife dies and her husband is alive, he is a 'surplus man'. If a husband dies and wife is alive, that woman is a 'surplus woman'. These are the terms which Ambedkar coined. If those surplus women and surplus men are still in their youth or middle age, they have to marry again. Such marriages have to take place in the same caste, otherwise, those individuals may look at other castes for their remarriage. Then the caste system would be disturbed. What may be a solution for this problem of remarriages without such a risk?

Those who have understood the problem we have analysed so far may easily arrive at a solution: 'What is the problem here? It is enough if marriage takes place between a surplus woman and a surplus man. It will also be an endogamous marriage', they may say. But Ambedkar does not find such a solution. Moreover, for him, this problem of remarriage appeared to be a very difficult one. He gave an elaborate explanation in general, that all problems of woman such as 'Sati' had emerged due to this problem of remarriage:

> "...this encircling to prevent marriages from without creates problems from within which are not very easy of solution... if endogamy is to be preserved conjugal rights from within have to be provided for, otherwise members of the group will be driven out of the circle to take care of themselves in any way they can. But in order that the conjugal rights be provided for from within, it is absolutely necessary to maintain a numerical equality between the marriageable units of the two sexes

within the group desirous of making itself into a Caste. It is only through the maintenance of such equality that the necessary endogamy of the group can be kept intact, and a very large disparity is sure to break it. *The problem of Caste, then, ultimately resolves itself into one of repairing the disparity between the marriageable units of the two sexes within it...* The husband may die before the wife and create a *surplus woman...* In like manner the husband may survive his wife and be *surplus man,...* both the *surplus man* and the *surplus woman* constitute a menace to the Caste if not taken care of, for not finding suitable partners inside their prescribed circle (and left to themselves they cannot find any, for if the matter be not regulated there can only be just enough pairs to go round) very likely they will transgress the boundary, marry outside and import offspring that is foreign to the Caste" (Vol. 1, p.10).

Ambedkar's explanation continues as follows:

"...our task will be amply rewarded if we scrutinize the solution the Hindus arrived at to meet the problems of the *surplus man* and *surplus woman*.... Complex though it be in its general working the Hindu society, even to a superficial observer, presents three singular uxorial customs, namely: (I) *Sati* or the burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. (ii) Enforced widowhood by which a widow is not allowed to remarry. (iii) Girl marriage. In addition, one also notes a great hankering after *Sanyasa* (renunciation) on the part of the widower, but this may in some cases be due purely to psychic disposition. So far as I know, no scientific explanation of the origin of these customs is forthcoming even today" (Vol. 1, p.13).

The 'scientific explanation' for those phenomena, which others did not offer so far and which Ambedkar has now discovered is, however, the following:

"Regarding the question as to why they arose, I submit that they were needed to create the structure of caste..." (Vol. 1, p. 14).

How are these customs needed to create the structure of Caste? Following Ambedkar's explanation, first let us discuss the problem of 'surplus woman'. If a surplus woman, for the sake of her remarriage, chooses an unmarried man, there would be a danger tomorrow that an unmarried woman won't find a husband. Or if that surplus woman chooses a man from another caste, the caste system itself would be ruined. Therefore, the risk of ruin of caste will be averted if that woman is killed along with her husband. Or, in case that woman is allowed to live, she should not be permitted to remarry. For if she wants to remarry, the same problems will arise. Hence, that woman should be assigned to existence as a widow. Thus customs called Sati and widowhood have come into existence to perpetuate the caste system!

Let us first observe these two customs in the words of Ambedkar:

> "...the *surplus woman* (=widow), if not disposed of, remains in the group: but in her very existence lies a double danger. She may marry outside the Caste and violate endogamy, or she may marry within the Caste and through competition encroach upon the chances of marriage that must be reserved for the potential brides in the Caste. She is therefore a menace in any case, and something must be done to her if she cannot be burned along with her deceased husband. The second remedy is to enforce widowhood on her for the rest of her life" (Vol. 1, p.11).

This is how Sati and widowhood came into existence according to Ambedkar.

Well, then, why didn't 'Pati' (like 'Sati') and 'widowhood of men' come into existence in the case of surplus men just as it happened in the case of surplus women and for the same reasons? It is because a man is a man, isn't he? There is male domination in society, isn't it? It is man who in fact imposes restrictions on women, doesn't he? He won't impose restrictions on himself, does he? Hence no such customs had arisen in the case of man. Ambedkar himself proposed the following explanation:

> "The problem of *surplus man* (=widower) is much more important and much more difficult than that of the *surplus woman* in a group that desires to make itself into a Caste. From time immemorial man as compared with woman has had the upper hand. He is a dominant figure in every group and of the two sexes has greater prestige. With this traditional superiority of man over woman his wishes have always been consulted. Woman, on the other hand, has been an easy prey to all kinds of iniquitous injunctions, religious, social or economic. But man as a maker of injunctions is most often above them all" (Vol. 1, p.11).

There were no restrictions on the surplus man. His remarriage has to take place definitely. How should that remarriage take place if it has to be an endogamous marriage? If he chooses an unmarried young woman within the same caste, a situation would arise whereby an unmarried young man does not get a wife. Or if he selects a woman from another caste, the caste system will be ruined. Therefore, the remarriage of a surplus man has to take place with a very young girl instead of an unmarried grown-up woman. This is what we call 'girl-marriage' which is quite different from 'child-marriage'. In the case of 'child-marriage', both the bride and bridegroom are of young age. In the case of girl-marriage, the bride alone is younger while the bridegroom is (much) older. Thus the custom of 'girl-marriage' came into practice because of the problem of remarriage of surplus men. Look at this point as well in the words of Ambedkar:

"...in a caste thoroughly self-enclosed there are always just enough marriageable women to go round for the marriageable men. Under these circumstances the *surplus man* can be provided with a wife only by recruiting a bride from the ranks of those not yet marriageable in order to tie him down to the group. This is certainly the best of the possible solutions in the case of the *surplus man*. By this, he is kept within the Caste... by this endogamy morals are preserved" (Vol. 1, p.12).

But adverse questions will crop up concerning this argument as well. If a surplus man marries an unmarried grown-up woman, the balance between the numbers of young men and women will be disturbed, says Ambedkar. Well, then, won't the same thing happen when a surplus man marries a young girl? Won't a situation arise in which the young boys of that same time fail to find wives in future after they mature? The girl, whom a surplus man marries would have eventually become the wife of a young man had she not married to that surplus man. But, in Ambedkar's view, such a question does not arise. He has concluded right in the beginning that the balance between young men and women will be disturbed if a surplus older man marries a mature young woman. What remains then is marriage with a young girl. That's all. This appeared to him to be a very great argument.

At many places, Ambedkar's argument is fragmented. We don't find coherence between any two arguments. He did not at all feel any doubt whether girl-marriage would in no way solve the problem of remarriage of surplus men. Ambedkar says that some of the surplus men observe 'celibacy' while others 'renounce the world' and comments that there won't be any problem if they follow either path sincerely, otherwise it would be a menace to the preservation of caste morals. On the one hand he speaks of male domination and on the other he characterizes those men as if they have and should have morals! Because, 'the ruling ratio in a caste has to be one man to one woman' (Vol. 1, p.12). As if this moral principle, which has not become fact even today, was already implemented in the past!

Either in the past or in the present, don't men whose wives died remarry adult woman? Is this creating a situation in which unmarried young men fail to find wives? Aren't the men going for a second marriage, third marriage and marriage after marriage even while their wives are alive? In which caste and at what time did this 'ruling ratio' of 'one man to one woman' exist?

The custom of killing surplus women came into practice owing to the apprehension that they might go for inter-caste marriages, says Ambedkar, doesn't he? May that danger not arise through surplus women

or surplus unmarried young women? Won't those young women go for inter-caste marriages? Then the custom of killing young women clearly had to begin, didn't it?

What does this notion 'surplus women', in fact mean? What does the notion of 'surplus men' mean? How meaningless this argument is! Even if he imagines that kind of surplus people, why did their remarriage appear as such an insoluble a problem to Ambedkar? Why did marriages between those surplus women and surplus men not appear as a solution to Ambedkar? Amazing!

When this problem of surplus men and women itself is meaningless, how meaningless would be the argument that problems of women cropped up due to this problem? What Ambedkar did was to merely repeat his claim that he alone discovered the actual reason for problems like 'Sati' for the first time and that his argument alone is the correct one. He, however, does not seem to have realised how ridiculous his argument is at every step. For he says,

> "I am justified in holding that, whether regarded as ends or as means, *Sati, enforced widowhood* and *girl marriage* are customs that were primarily intended to solve the problem of the ***surplus man*** and ***surplus woman*** in a caste and to maintain its endogamy. Strict endogamy could not be preserved without these customs, while caste without endogamy is a fake" (Vol. 1. p.14).

> "This, in my opinion, is the general mechanism of a caste in a system of castes" (Vol. 1, p.13).

This means that all these customs will emerge if you want to perpetuate any caste.

Well then, are these customs found in the lower castes as well? Just as in the Brahmin caste, we surely find surplus women and surplus men in every caste. In order to perpetuate all the castes as castes, you would expect customs like Sati, widowhood and girl-marriage should occur in all the castes. Did they? Ambedkar's answer to this question is as follows:

> "Those castes that are nearest to the Brahmins have imitated all the three customs and insist on the widowhood and girl marriage; others, a little further off, have only girl marriage and those furthest off have imitated only the belief in the caste principle. This imperfect imitation, I dare say, is due partly to what Tarde calls 'distance' and partly to the barbarous character of these customs" (Vol. 1, p.20).

Ambedkar is very fond of declaring his courage at every point. To appreciate his courage, first we should be free from doubts concerning what he proposes. Here, the first doubt is: what does it mean when he says

that a caste is 'nearer' or 'distant' to the Brahmin caste? On what basis do 'nearness' and 'distance' form? Based on occupations? Economic conditions? Dressing and speech habits? These details, however, are not found in Ambedkar's explanation.

The second doubt: To the question 'why some castes do not observe customs like 'Sati', will it be sufficient answer if we say, "because those customs are cruel"? Some castes observe those 'cruel customs'. Why did those castes like that cruelty? Why did other castes not like that cruelty?

The third doubt: Ambedkar maintains that customs like 'Sati' came into practice because of the problem of surplus women. But the fact that there are castes which do not observe such customs imply that those castes are able to solve the problem of surplus women without such customs and continue to exist as castes, don't they? Does this not prove the fact that such customs did not arise for the problem of caste and there is no connection between such customs and continuity of caste?

Can we satisfy ourselves with any explanation unless we find an answer that does not give scope to any doubt to such an important question, namely, 'how did castes emerge?'

4) Distinction between 'Varnas' and Castes!

At every opportune moment, Ambedkar criticizes, detests and rejects castes. This is clearly justified, natural and necessary. Any sensible person ought to do the same thing. He, however, praises 'the four Varnas' while seriously criticizing 'castes'. This certainly surprises us.

According to Ambedkar, there is considerable difference between the four Varnas and castes. We may observe that difference briefly as follows:

1) Under the caste system all the castes are hierarchically arranged like steps in a ladder. But there were no such hierarchical differences among Varnas under the Varna system.

2) Under the caste system, we find only endogamy but not exogamy. But, there was exogamy among all Varnas.

3) Within the caste system, it was not possible to change castes. But under the Varna system it was possible to change Varnas on the basis of qualifications.

4) Castes are hereditary; but Varnas are not hereditary.

Thus, according to Ambedkar, the four Varna system is superior though it has its defects. But, the information which Ambedkar considered shows that:

1) Hierarchical differences did not begin with the caste system but existed in the days of Varnas. The information which Ambedkar himself gave tells us that the Brahmin Varna is the highest Varna and the Shudra Varna is a servant Varna. Which means, the four Varnas are not of equal status.

2) Stories such as the tale of 'Shantan and Ganga' are evidence that suggests to us that exogamy existed under the Varna system. We cannot, however, arrive at historical conclusions based on such puranas.

3) Such stories—which say that Manu and Saptarishis conduct oral interviews of all the people and change their Varnas—appear to be the only evidence to suggest that Varnas could be changed. If we analyse this aspect in greater detail, it would become clear how meaningless it is in actuality and how impossible it is in practice. It should be a sensible thing to reject such baseless puranas.

4) The 'Gurukul system' is the evidence which Ambedkar adduces in support of his argument that the Varnas were not hereditary. Under this system, Shudras were also supposed to receive education for 12 years in Gurukulas. Thereafter, the Guru (teacher) himself would determine Varna of each individual. That Varna, therefore, would relate to that individual person only.

It would be an intelligent thing to put an end to such folk tales after telling them to kids.

Based on which of these 4 aspects can we arrive at the conclusion that 'Varnas are superior' to a caste system? There is no such aspect. All the evil aspects of castes appear in the four Varnas also. If we go by the information which Ambedkar provided, we must ask why did the Brahmin Varna change into the Brahmin caste by introducing endogamy? Only to establish its domination permanently. If that is so, then it means that the Varna was already dominant! Isn't the servile Shudra caste the same as the servile Shudra Varna? What is the distinction between a Varna and a caste in essence in their case? There is no distinction. Both are identical. The difference lies only in their names. Moreover, when we speak of the 'four Varnas' only four appear, while many hundreds appear when we speak of 'castes'. This is because a division in Varnas occurred over a period of several thousands of years. It was Ambedkar himself who pointed out this division.

Implying that Varnas themselves evolved into Castes, Ambedkar makes the following observation regarding this proliferation of castes:

> "The basic conception of social organization which prevails among the Hindus starts with the rise of four classes or Varnas into which Hindu society is believed to have become divided. These four classes were

named: (1) Brahmins, the priestly and the educated class, (2) The Kshatriyas, the military class, (3) The Vaishyas, the trading class and, (4) The Shudras, the servant class. For a time these were merely classes. After a time what were only Classes (Varnas) became Castes (Jatis) and the four castes became four thousand. In this way the modern Caste System was only the evolution of the ancient Varna System" (Vol. 5, p. 156).

After having taken his argument thus far Ambedkar, of course, says that although the castes emerged from the Varnas the two are not the same, that there is considerable difference between the two and that we have to understand the difference. That is his opinion, which is a different issue. The point with which we are concerned here is that it is Ambedkar who said that 'four Varnas themselves became divided into many castes'.

What does 'division' mean here? We have already noted that apparently 'occupations alone were the basis for the four Varnas'. Does 'division in Varnas' mean 'division in the occupations' or not? When the Brahmin Varna split into some branches, does it mean that the occupation of each sub-Varna became distinct branches? If occupations alone are the basis for Varnas, should that not mean that occupations alone ought to have been the basis for castes as well?

But in another context, Ambedkar says that the 'caste question is not the question of occupations'. We will consider this point later. Here, it is enough to note that 'the caste question is the question of occupations only' is not our conclusion. We are merely raising a pertinent question, namely, 'does the information which Ambedkar himself gave not lead to the same conclusion?' If we examine issues based on Ambedkar's explanation, will it not become evident that occupations alone ought to have been the basis for castes? This is the conclusion which must be derived from that information.

If some people say that division does not mean division in occupations, then they will have the onus of explanation of that aspect to which the division is related! Ambedkar had merely said that 'Varnas got divided into many castes' but he did not say, even subsequently which aspect of the situation caused that division.

When somebody says that 'castes might have emerged according to occupations', Ambedkar may indeed ask the following good question: 'don't occupations exist in other countries? Why don't castes exist there?' If we don't raise such a question, we assume that it is natural for castes to exist in India and continue to practise them. Therefore, it is obligatory on our part to raise the question 'why did castes originate in India at all (and nowhere else)?'

However, the main point here is, why did Ambedkar raise the same question concerning Varnas which he raised in relation to castes? We would have to raise the question 'why did Varnas come into being?' before we raise the question 'why do castes exist'. But Ambedkar raises the question only regarding castes but not where Varnas are concerned. It is because Varnas appeared to him natural divisions. He holds the view that it is natural to have different social divisions in any country; hence the four Varnas too existed in India and we need not further question the fact. Because of this view, he does not raise the question about Varnas. All his questions concern only caste. 'In other countries, the social divisions of the past gradually reconciled themselves and got united. But it did not happen so in India. Here the four Varnas, instead of becoming one, changed into castes. Such castes are not found anywhere', says Ambedkar.

But, when we say that the social divisions in other countries did not change into castes while the four Varnas of India alone had changed into castes' does it not mean that the reason for such change lies in the four Varnas only? Does it not mean that the nature of Varna is such that it leads to castes? It follows, in any case, that castes are a continuation of Varnas. Whatever is the basis for Varnas, the same must be the basis for castes. Whether that basis is occupations or something else is a separate matter. In any case castes could not have come into being from somewhere else without any connection with Varnas. Varnas have to be the basis for castes.

According to Ambedkar, however, the four Varnas and the castes are two different things. The basis for the Varnas is occupations only. But, the basis for castes is not occupations. It is something else. It is 'endogamy'. If it is true that Varnas emerged due to occupations and castes due to endogamy, then the situation in the society would be such that Varnas should appear on one side and castes on the other side independently and separately from one another. This means, in India in the life of every individual person there should be one Varna and one caste. While Varna should be in relation to occupation, caste should be in relation to the rules of endogamy. If it is a fact that Varna and caste emerged due to different reasons and not due to the same reason, then they have to exist separately. But, nowhere do they exist like that. Only one thing is present: either 'Varna' or 'caste'.

The term 'four Varnas' is, however, only found in the Sanskrit books of Hindu religious literature. Nobody uses this term in the real life. All people do use the word 'caste'.

Suppose, as a result of different kinds of discussions, it becomes evident that 'occupations alone are the basis for castes'. Even then the

problem will not be solved. The question, namely, 'why do castes exist only in India while occupations exist in all the countries', will remain as before. We have not moved forward even a single inch in our effort to find out the answer to this question. That effort has slid into confusion as we try to follow the path of Ambedkar.

There is another situation that leads to further confusion. It appears that instead of holding a single stable view, Ambedkar holds two kinds of views that are mutually inconsistent. Sometimes he depicts Varnas as good and sometimes as bad.

If others say that both Varnas and castes are bad and that they are identical, he opposes that view vehemently and argues that the two are not identical; that only Castes are bad; that Varnas are not bad; indeed, that they are superior.

If others say that 'four Varnas are superior; castes alone are bad and the two are not identical, he would vehemently oppose them as well and argues thus: 'Are the Varnas superior? How are they superior? Varnas too are bad like Castes. Both are the same'.

We have to consider Ambedkar's words themselves in order to understand as how he came to make such strange arguments.

The first kind of argument that glorifies Varnas is as follows:

> "The principle underlying caste is fundamentally different from the principle underlying *Varna*. Not only are they fundamentally different but they are also fundamentally opposed. The former is based on worth" (Vol. 1, p.59).

> "Varna is not hereditary either in status or occupation. On the other hand Caste implies a system in which status and occupation are hereditary and descend from father to son" (Vol. 3, p. 286).

Caste is 'bad'. Varna is contrary to Caste. Which means, Varna is 'good'. If caste is based on birth, Varna is based on 'worth'. Thus, Varna is a superior phenomenon. Another point that we have to remember here is that 'occupation' is the basis for Varna as well as caste according to Ambedkar! In the case of Varna, one can change one's occupation. In the case of caste, there is no scope to change the occupation. This is the only difference! Yet occupation alone is the basis for both the things.

The second kind of argument that opposes 'Varna' runs as follows:

> "There cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than the Chaturvarnya. It is the system which deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity. This is no exaggeration. History bears ample evidence" (Vol. 1, p.63).

> "How can anybody who is not a congenital idiot accept Chaturvarnya as the ideal form of society? Individually and socially it is a folly and a crime. One class and one class alone to be entitled to education and learning! One class and one class alone to be entitled to arms! One class and one class alone to trade! One class and one class alone to serve!" (Vol. 1, p.219).

> "The ordinary rule of *Chaturvarna,* was that a Shudra could never become a Brahmin. A Shudra was born a Shudra and could not be made a Brahmin" (Vol. 7, p.285).

> "In the first place, the idea of *Varna* is the parent of the idea of *caste.* If the idea of caste is a pernicious idea it is entirely because of the viciousness of the idea of *Varna.* Both are evil ideas and it matters very little whether one believes in *Varna* or in *caste*. The idea of *Varna* was most mercilessly attacked by the Buddhists who did not believe in it" (Vol. 9, p. 289).

All these are examples opposing Varnas. Is it necessary to elaborate this point further? At some places he says that 'Varna and Caste are mutually contradictory' and at other places he says that they are the same, both are bad! In yet other places, Ambedkar says that Varna is 'vicious' and caste is 'pernicious'. If Varnas too are bad, why then did Ambedkar actually glorify them in certain other contexts?

'A Shudra in a Varna system dies as a Shudra and he cannot become a Brahmin', says Ambedkar, doesn't he? Then what about his investigation which concluded that Varnas depend on 'worth' and not on 'birth' and a Shudra can change into any Varna? The second argument is wrong according to the first one. The first argument is wrong according to the second one. Such inconsistent views on a single issue!

This situation has arisen, one suspects, because of his attitude of rejecting anything that others said without examining whether it is god or bad! When others say something is 'good', he would immediately say it is 'bad'! If others say that something is 'bad', he would say it is 'good'! It appears that Ambedkar is 'committed' to this theory. Not only here but also at many other places!

Two mutually inconsistent kinds of arguments regarding 'Varna' are readily available with Ambedkar. This is amazing! Whenever and whatever he says, it alone is right! For instance, 'Buddhists did not believe Varnas', Ambedkar himself has said this, hasn't he? Then why did he believe in Varnas at least in some contexts?

Well, what actually is the view of Ambedkar on the four Varnas? How to understand Ambedkar's study of the issue amidst this kind of confusion?

In his study of castes, too, Ambedkar raised the utterly meaningless question of 'surplus women' and 'surplus men'. Without following minimal logic, namely, 'what is the problem when those surplus men and women were ready to marry again?', Ambedkar linked those women with 'Sati' and those men with 'girl-marriages'. Which aspect is logical in this explanation which he claimed to be 'scientific'? Which aspect is acceptable?

What point did Ambedkar discover about castes while he criticized other researchers by belittling them with such expressions concerning their views such as 'the grand name without the grand thing', 'he does not very much advance our thought', 'it is a very poor discovery', 'the car has been shunted on wrong lines' and so on (Vol. 1, pp.17 & 22). Can't we reject his explanation—which at some places says that Varnas and Castes are one and the same and at other places that the two are not the same—as 'this is not at all an explanation'?

While claiming his explanation to be systematic and scientific through his essay, Ambedkar concludes as follows in the last para by exhibiting conventional modesty that he proposes thoughts which came to his mind.

> "Apart from its practical importance the subject of Caste is an all absorbing problem and the interest aroused in me regarding its theoretical foundations has moved me to put before you some of the conclusions, which seem to me well founded, and the grounds upon which they may be supported. I am not, however, so presumptuous as to think them in any way final, or anything more than a contribution to a discussion of the subject. It seems to me that the car has been shunted on wrong lines, and the primary object of the paper is to arrive at a serviceable truth. We must, however, guard against approaching the subject with a bias. Sentiment must be outlawed from the domain of science and things should be judged from an objective standpoint. For myself I shall find as much pleasure in a positive destruction of my own ideology, as in a rational disagreement on a topic, which, notwithstanding many learned disquisitions is likely to remain controversial forever. To conclude, while I am ambitious to advance a Theory of Caste, if it can be shown to be untenable I shall be equally willing to give it up" (Vol. 1, p.22).

There is no consistency between what he says at the end (that he is offering his views for the sake of discussion) and the claim that he makes from the beginning (that he alone is offering a scientific explanation which no one else has offered so far).

If the writer believes that he alone has offered a scientific explanation of the caste question, he has to maintain the same stand for consistency. In other words, if he strongly believes that his understanding of castes is very logical, he should not say that he has put forward his views for

discussion. He ought to stand firm on his views, but with modesty!

However much people try to capture the origin of castes, they are not able to succeed. If we want to take occupations as the basis for the origin of castes, a fundamental question is already lurking against such assumption. Or, even if we want to take endogamy as the basis of castes, it too has its shortcomings. Wherever we look, we find only questions and no answers are available. Finally, we are not able to locate the basis.

As Ambedkar himself pointed out, certain issues 'remain controversial forever'!

2 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, HOW THE 'SHUDRA' VARNA CAME INTO EXISTENCE?

What does ancient Hindu religious literature say about 'Shudras'? It says that Shudras were born from the feet of Brahma. So Shudras became the lowest of the four Varnas. The first three Varnas are considered the upper Varnas, though there are distinctions among them as well. The duty of Shudras is to serve the upper Varnas. The religious literature tells much more about Shudras: Shudras do not deserve respect; they do not need education; it is sin as well as crime to give them education; a Shudra should not possess property; he should not be allowed to acquire property even if he is capable of doing so. In case a Shudra acquires property, his Master can confiscate it. The right to acquire property belongs to persons who can become Masters. A Shudra should not do any job in the court of a king. He has to serve the upper Varnas and receive subsistence from them. He has to satisfy himself by consuming leftovers after the Master has consumed what he desires. A Brahmin can compel a Shudra to do service to him irrespective of whether the Brahmin purchased him or not, because the Shudra will obtain heavenly advantage (punya) performing service for the Brahmin. A Shudra should never leave his Master. Servitude is inborn to a Shudra. A Shudra must remain a servant always. The upper Varnas have two births; they are twice born. They have their second birth from the time they begin to wear the sacred thread (Yagnopavitha). Shudras have only one birth since they are forbidden the sacred thread.

The men of the upper Varnas can 'keep' Shudra women. But Shudra men cannot have relationships with women of the upper Varnas.

The names of persons of the upper Varnas should be chosen in accordance with their superiority and the names of Shudras should indicate their low status. As a Shudra is an unholy creature, one should not read Vedas or perform pious activities in the presence of a Shudra. If a Shudra happens to listen to Vedic recitations, one has to pour either boiled oil or lead or sealing wax into his ear. If a Shudra recites Vedas or preaches religious principles, his tongue must be cut out. If a Shudra assaults a person of the upper Varnas, one has to cut his limb with which he committed that crime. The life of a Shudra has no value. Anybody belonging to the upper Varnas can kill a Shudra without any compensation. At the most, one may pay a little in the case of a Shudra compared to heavy compensations due to a Brahmin or a Vysya. (These details are in Ambedkar, volume 7, pp. 43, 50, 52 & 55). This is what the religious texts tell us about Shudras: that Brahma created them for servitude.

Some Anthropologists explain the origin of the Shudra Varna as follows. In the ancient times, a race with fair complexion called 'Aryans' came from outside, invaded India, conquered the indigenous primitive tribal population with dark complexion called Dasas and Dasyus and made them their slaves. The defeated population gradually formed into the Shudra Varna. It was these Aryans who composed the entire literature such as the Vedas that constitutes Hindu religious scriptures. It is these scriptures that described Shudras thus.—This is what scholars say about Shudras.

Regarding the theory of birth from the feet of Brahma, none except fools will give it credence. There need not be any discussion of it at all. So, let us consider the theory of conquests of Aryan invasion. Some people oppose this theory also, Ambedkar being a very important opponent. According to him, this is false theory. It emerged out of the arrogance of western researchers. "The theory of the Aryan race is just an assumption and no more", says Ambedkar (Vol. 7, p.78). For the conclusion that 'there existed some thing called the Aryan race' is based on linguistic evidence. Bopp, in his book *Comparative Grammar* published in 1835, showed some facts concerning languages. His book demonstrated that a greater number of languages of Europe and some languages of Asia descended from one common ancestral language. Based on Bopp, those languages with common ancestry are called Indo-Germanic languages. They are also called 'Aryan languages' since there was a mention of Aryans in Vedic scriptures and Vedic language too was an Indo-Germanic language. Scholars assumed that all Aryan languages descended from the common ancestral speech and that there must have been a population which spoke that common ancestral speech as mother tongue and hence called that population the 'Aryan race'. It was assumed that contact between languages might have occurred since the arrival and settlement of the Aryan race in India.

But Ambedkar rejects this argument. He says:

> "Knowing that nothing can prove the superiority of the Aryan race better than invasion and conquest of native races, the Western writers have proceeded to invent the story of the invasion of India by the Aryans and the conquest by them of the Dasas and Dasyus" (Vol. 7, p. 79).

The theory of Aryan race argues that it was Aryan race that composed Vedas. But Ambedkar says that there is no evidence in Vedas to support the theory. His conclusions are the following:

> "(1) The Vedas do not know any such race as the Aryan race. (2) There is no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of India by the Aryan race and its having conquered the Dasas and Dasyus supposed to be natives of India. (3) There is no evidence to show that the distinction between Aryans, Dasas and Dasyus was a racial distinction. (4) The Vedas do not support the contention that the Aryans were different in colour from the Dasas and Dasyus" (Vol. 7, p. 85).

Ambedkar observes that if it were Aryans who wrote Vedas, the books themselves suggest that these Aryans are of two types, that they were 'opposed and inimical to each other' and that the two communities 'gradually became one' (pp. 86-7). According to Ambedkar, in fact, there was no such race as 'Aryans', that population too was part of India and Dasas and Dasyus were not a primitive people:

> "The Dasas and Dasyus were not primitive people. They were as civilized as the Aryans... [and] lived in cities... and under kings the names of many of whom are mentioned... The Dasyus were wealthy and owned property in the plains and on the hills. They were adorned with their array of gold and jewels. They owned many castles... The Dasyus owned chariots and used them in war like the Aryans... That the Dasas and Dasyus were the same as the Shudras is a pure figment of imagination. It is only a wild guess. It is tolerated because persons who make it are respectable scholars" (Vol. 7, pp. 105-6).

> "From the foregoing statement of facts, it will be seen that there is a solid foundation in anthropometry and history, in support of the Rig Veda that there were in India two Aryan races and not one... The Western theory is thus in conflict with the Rig Veda on a major issue. The Rig Veda being the best evidence on the subject the theory which is in conflict with it must be rejected... As to the conquest of the native tribes, assuming it to be a fact,... It must also explain which of the two Aryans conquered the Dasas and Dasyus if they conquered them at all... The Western theory, it is clear, is only a hurried conclusion drawn from insufficient examination of facts and believed to be correct because it tallied with certain pre-conceived notions about the mentality of the ancient Aryans which they were supposed to have possessed on no other

grounds except that their alleged modern descendants, namely, the Indo Germanic races are known to possess. It is built on certain selected facts which are assumed to be the only facts. It is extraordinary that a theory with such a slender and insecure foundation in fact would have been propounded by Western scholars for serious scholars and should have held the field for such a long time. In the face of the discovery of new facts set out... the theory can no longer stand and must be thrown on the scrap heap" (Vol. 7, pp.99-100).

It is not only this much that Ambedkar discussed the theory of Aryan race. We cannot see all the things here. Ambedkar is so angry at the theory of 'conquest of India by Aryan race' that he insists thus: "Like the snake it must be killed" (Vol. 7, p.86).

Well, we shall let that pass. Whose opinion is correct regarding the theory of the Aryan race: the western researchers' or Ambedkar's? This is not something we can resolve here, nor do we need to. Here, we don't need it either. What we are concerned with is this: If the Shudra Varna was not formed as the theory of Aryan race suggests, how does Ambedkar explain its formation? This is the crucial question. Before that, we have to know at least in an outline the meaning of the restrictions imposed on Shudras in religious texts.

Consider the restriction, which says that 'Shudras should not acquire property'. What is 'property'? Property, during that period of time, was mainly land. In order to survive—to raise crops, rear animals or do any occupation—a person has to possess some land, certain kinds of implements. To say that 'Shudras should not possess these' implies that the 'upper castes alone should possess these'. Then, how should Shudras live? By doing service for the upper Varnas! What does 'service' mean? Shudras have to do all those chores, which are necessary for the upper Varnas to survive and which they do not want to do themselves. The Shudras, therefore, must cultivate the land under the possession of the upper Varnas. They must raise their cattle. They must make clothing, shoes and everything the upper Varnas want. They do all the domestic work. Shudras' service to the upper Varnas meant doing all chores at home and outside so that Masters need not work.

Then how will the upper Varnas occupy themselves if Shudras alone do all the work? Let us suppose that Brahmins perform worship, Khshatriyas prepare for and fight wars and Vysyas conduct business, as the religious texts suggest. None of these activities, however, gives them products necessary for their subsistence. Not a single blade of grass grows due to Vedic recitations and sacrificial activities (yagna and yaga). They produce not a single grain of corn. Not a single calf of a cow grows. Neither

a hand-breadth of cloth, a pair of shoes, a small stool or a winnowing basket may be conjured out of these activities. In contrast, many articles which Shudras produced will be consumed in activities related to worship. Similarly, due to wars that the Kshatriya Varna wages, products which Shudras produce will be consumed and new articles are not produced. Likewise, due to the business that the Vysya Varna conducts, products which the Shudras produce will be exchanged (bought and sold) and new articles are not produced.

Worship, war and business are not natural necessities of life. All the activities which religious texts describe and which the upper Varnas perform are utterly useless activities. They will not at all be help them to subsist. For all members of society to subsist, many kinds of labour—such as cultivation, animal husbandry, weaving and tailoring, all of which the Shudras had to perform—must take place. One can subsist very well without the activities which the upper Varnas perform; but not a single person can live without activities which the Shudra Varna performs.

This means, the Shudra Varna has to do work not only for its own subsistence but also for the subsistence of the upper Varnas. Let us call this work 'labour'. It is only the Shudra Varna which performs all kinds of labour necessary for all Varnas. Of the total labour which the Shudra Varna performs, only a small part is necessary for its own subsistence while the greater remaining part goes to support the upper Varnas! This is, surely, 'exploitation of labour'! That is, the upper Varnas live by exploiting the labour of Shudras. This is the advantage which the upper Varnas enjoy because of the existence of Shudras as servant class. Neither Shudras nor the upper Varnas know the fact that exploitation of labour is taking place between them. But the upper Varnas believe that they have a right to all services done by Shudras, that it is the duty of Shudras to serve the Masters because they are mere servants.

As Shudras would not do services to the upper Varnas if they themselves possessed property (land), the upper Varnas laid down restrictions that Shudras should not possess property, that the upper Varnas alone should possess all available property and Shudras should remain servants. Shudras are subservient to the upper Varnas because they already exist as propertyless slaves. The fact that Masters have the right even to kill Shudras clearly shows that the Shudra Varna is propertyless slave-class. One must therefore conclude that the upper Varnas started not only exploitation of labour but also created all the cruel codes that perpetuate it.

How did slavery of these Shudras begin in India?—This is the question which we need to discuss next. We know that it did not begin

from 'the feet of Brahma'. Also it is not a consequence of the conquest of Aryan race, says Ambedkar. Ambedkar, who rejected the theory of Aryan race, proposed a 'new thesis' as to how Shudra Varna originated. He said:

> "After an examination of historical material and of theories suggested by various writers—orthodox as well as modern—I have put forth a new thesis."

Ambedkar's thesis begins from a time much earlier to the time of the ChaturVarnas. Then there were only the first three upper Varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vysyas. The Shudra Varna did not yet exist. Ambedkar proposes this by pointing to some contexts in Rig Veda:

> "The first piece of evidence I rely upon is that of the Rig Veda itself. There are some scholars who maintain that the Varna system did not exist in the age of the Rig Veda... it is not possible to accept the statement that the Varna system did not exist in the time of the Rig Veda... For, the Rig Veda, apart from the Purusha Sukta, does mention Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas not once but many times... What is important is that the Rig Veda does not mention Shudra as a separate Varna. If Shudras were a separate *Varna* there is no reason why the Rig Veda should not have mentioned them. The true conclusion to be drawn from the Rig Veda is not that the Varna system did not exist, but that there were only three *Varnas* and that Shudras were not regarded as a fourth and a separate *Varna*... The second piece of evidence I rely on is the testimony of the two Brahmanas, the Satapatha and Taittiriya. Both speak of the creation of three *Varnas* only. They do not speak of the creation of the Shudras as separate Varna" (Vol.7, pp.132-3).

After proposing the new point that there were only three upper Varnas at the beginning of Varna system, Ambedkar's theory proceeds further as follows: There was a branch called 'Shudras' within the second Varna of Kshatriyas. These Shudras used to be ministers and kings just like other Kshatriyas. In other words, the Shudras too were an upper Varna at that time. But there was intense rivalry between the Shudras and the Brahmins because Brahmins possessed many special rights. Shudras were not able to tolerate the domination of Brahmins. Hence they used to come into conflict with Brahmins. Well, why did the Shudra branch of Kshatriyas come into conflict with Brahmins while the other Kshatriyas did not? It was because all the Kshatriyas of the Shudra branch belonged to the "Solar" race. The people of the Solar race were 'virile'. The remaining Kshatriyas were not so virile. That is why, only Shudras used to come into conflict with Brahmins. Owing to these conflicts, the Brahmins developed hatred towards Shudras and stopped performing Upanayanas for them. There is a connection between Upanayana and property rights. Owing to the denial of Upanayana, all the Shudras of this branch degraded from the upper Varna

to the fourth Varna, the servant Varna. Since then began the fourth Varna. Thus did the Shudra Varna emerge as a special Varna. In this manner, while proposing his new thesis on 'Shudra Varna', Ambedkar discussed many related issues in his book *Who were Shudras?* (Vol. 7).

1) Shudras were also Kshatriyas!

Now, let us examine the arguments of Ambedkar with regard to the question of the origin of the Shudra Varna. This is a question, incidentally, relating to some eighty per cent of the Indian population today.

Ambedkar shows the following evidence for his view that Shudras used to be a branch within the Kshatriya Varna:

> "We have, however, direct evidence in support of the proposition that Shudra is a proper name of a tribe or a clan... The historians of Alexander's invasion of India have described a number of republics as free, independent and autonomous whom Alexander encountered... Among these is mentioned a people called *Sodari*... Lassen identified them with the ancient *Shudras*. Patanjali at 1.2.3 of his Mahabhashya mentions Shudras and associates them with the Abhiras. The Mahabharata in chapter XXXII of the Sabha parvan speaks of the republic of the Shudras. The Vishnu Purana as well as the Markandeya Purana and the Brahma Purana refer to the Shudras as a separate tribe..." (Vol. 7, p. 103).

In the Shanti parva of Mahabharata, there is a story that a Shudra king named Paijavana performed 'sacrifices'. Ambedkar informs his readers that this particular story is the primary source of his theory. While mentioning the writer of Maharabharata, Ambedkar says:

> "Whether it is *Vyasa, Vaishampayana, Suta, Lomaharshana* or *Bhrigu* it is difficult to say. But whoever he was, he has rendered great service by giving a full description of *Paijavana.* If he had not described *Paijavana* as a *Shudra,* the clue to the origin of the *Shudra* would have been completely lost. I express my gratitude to the writer for having preserved so important a piece of information for posterity. Without it, this book (*Who were the Shudras?*) could not have been written" (Vol.7, pp. 18-19).

Ambedkar describes Shudra kings as follows:

> "(1) The Shudras were Aryans. (2) The Shudras belonged to the Kshatriya class. (3) The Shudras were so important a class of Kshatriyas that some of the most eminent and powerful kings of the ancient Aryan communities were Shudras" (Vol. 7, p. 114).

After depicting Shudra kings as 'the most eminent and powerful

kings', Ambedkar explains the reason for the conflict between these Shudra kings and the Brahmins. What sort of special rights did the Brahmin Varna have which infuriated the Shudras? The word 'Kshatriyas' in Ambedkar's explanation sometimes relates to only Shudras and sometimes to all Kshatriyas. We have to interpret it according to the context.

> "It seems that ... a dispute was going on between Brahmins and Kshatriyas on the following points" (Vol. 7, p. 148).

The contention of the Brahmins was that they alone have the right to receive gifts without performing labour. Further, Kshatriyas have the right to study the Vedas but have no right to teach them. Similarly, Kshatriyas have the right to perform sacrifices but not the right to officiate at a sacrifice. But all these were privileges of the Brahmins. The dispute is connected with these privileges only.

Ambedkar did not explain what the Kshatriyas hoped for from these disputes. But we can understand it easily. The Kshatriyas were expecting to have the right to receive gifts without doing work just like the Brahmins. Similarly, they knew that they would get some 'contributions' (dakshina) if they had the right to teach the Vedas and officiate at sacrifices. This means Kshatriyas felt antagonistic towards Brahmins concerning the right to accumulate riches and wealth by means of the easy activities of worship and ritual without having to perform tasks such as cultivation, animal husbandry, weaving and sewing.

The above list of privileges of Brahmins is, incidentally, not complete. There are fourteen other kinds of privileges. Well, when did these privileges exist? During the period in which only three Varnas existed! The Brahmin Varna had so many privileges and superiority even before the rise of four Varnas! Moreover, these privileges included those rights which are hereditary.

What did Ambedkar say about the superiority of 'four Varnas'? How elaborately he described it: that nothing is hereditary in the four-Varna system; that the determination of the Varna of each individual person is entirely done on the basis of his ability and qualifications; that all Varnas exist uniformly and as equals; that it was the Brahmin Varna that initiated castes for privileges which had not been hereditary earlier; that castes, thus, became hereditary, whereas Varnas were not! But now he seems to be depicting the situation as if the Brahmin Varna had all these privileges even when the four-Varnas did not exist. This cannot be ignored as 'a minor mistake'. Grand theories relating to castes and Shudras have been built on this one point. If we conclude that hereditary privileges existed in the four-Varna system, we have also to conclude that Varnas are hereditary. Then the further conclusion will force itself upon us: that there

is no distinction between Varnas and castes. Only then will the correctness or incorrectness of the theory—which says that Brahmin Varna initiated castes for the sake of hereditary privileges—be settled. As all aspects of this point are so inter-connected, we should not treat any fundamental inconsistency of the arguments as 'a minor mistake'. We have to pay proper attention to the correctness and incorrectness of those arguments.

Now let us look at some other privileges of the Brahmin Varna. All these privileges existed during the days when there were only three Varnas. Observe whether or not hereditary privileges were present.

> "(1) The Brahmin must be acknowledged to be the guru to all Varnas by the mere fact of his birth. (2) The Brahmin has the sole right of deciding upon the duties of all other classes, what conduct was proper to them and what should be their means of livelihood; and the other classes were to abide by his directions and the king was to rule in accordance with such directions. (3) The Brahmin is not subject to the authority of the king. The king was the ruler of all except the Brahmin. (4) The Brahmin is exempt from whipping; fetters being put on him; the imposition of fines; exile; censure and abandonment. (5) A Shrotriya (a Brahmin learned in Vedas) is free from taxes. (6) A Brahmin is entitled to claim the whole of the treasure trove if he found it. If the King found it he must give half to the Brahmin. (7) The property of a Brahmin dying without an heir shall not go to the king, but shall be distributed among Shrotriyas or Brahmins. (8) The king meeting a Shrotriya or a Brahmin on the road must give way to the Brahmin. (9) The Brahmin must be saluted first. (10) The person of a Brahmin is sacred. No death sentence would be passed against a Brahmin even if he is guilty of murder. (11) Threatening a Brahmin with assault, or striking him or drawing blood from his body is an offence. (12) For certain offences the Brahmin must receive a lesser punishment than members of other classes. (13) The king should not summon a Brahmin as a witness where the litigant is not a Brahmin. (14) Even when a woman has had ten former husbands who are not Brahmins, if a Brahmin marries such a woman, it is he alone who is her husband and not a Rajanya or a Vaishya to whom she may have been married" (Vol. 7, p.189-90).

Apart from these, many other privileges have been mentioned on the same page. All are of the same type. All of them indicate that a person can behave as he likes without any hurdle or control, if he is born a Brahmin. It is clear, therefore, that the Brahmins had these privileges even before the rise of four Varnas.

Is there any consistency between what Ambedkar says in other contexts and what he says in this context? Did not the question strike him: 'I said such and such there, so why am I saying thus here?' So haphazard

a manner of presentation of arguments by a person who has undertaken the burden of explaining such enormous problems as the 'origin of castes', the 'origin of Shudras' and so on! Arguments according to mere convenience! It is surprising!

After mentioning these fourteen privileges of the Brahmin Varna, Ambedkar observes that, though all these privileges of the Brahmins did not arise at one time, there is no doubt that some of the most annoying ones 'such as 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9' had already come into existence during the era of three-varna system. It was these privileges that infuriated Kshatriyas (Vol. 7, p. 190). In support of the Kshatriyas, one can say there is 'no doubt' that Brahmins had privileges by birth! Yet Ambedkar seems to say in another context, glorifying the four Varna system, that there is 'no doubt' that any Varna has any particular privilege! Readers have to go forward learning the historical knowledge in this manner!

Concerning privileges 1, 2, 3, 8 and 14 of the Brahmins had, Ambedkar himself further says this: "These were enough to infuriate any decent and self-respecting body of men" (p. 190). But, Kshatriyas got infuriated not due to decency and self-respect. The actual reason for their 'infuriation' is the Brahmin's birth right to accumulate riches without doing any work! The dispute between these two Varnas occurred only for the sake of such rights! This is what Ambedkar describes as the 'struggle for self-respect' by Kshatriyas.

Ambedkar cited some stories from the religious literature with reference to the conflict between these Varnas. There are stories like those of Trisanka, Harischandra, Ambarisha, Kalmashapada, etc. These indicate the conflict in which a Kshatriya called 'Viswamitra' was involved. Ambedkar also cited stories of many conflicts such as those between king Sudas and Vashista, king Pururava and Brahmins, king Nahashu and Brahmins, king Nimi and Brahmins, king Vena and Brahmins and so on.

The writers of religious texts describe conflicts of this kind as struggles over 'sainthood' and 'superiority'. Ambedkar, however, describes them as struggles of Kshatriyas for self-respect. But, in fact, the right way is to understand them as struggles for positions like priesthood and for a share in the wealth that may be obtained without difficulty and without doing labour.

What Ambedkar proposed afresh by citing these stories of conflict amounts only to this: that all the Kshatriyas in these stories belong to the 'Shudra branch' of Kshatriyas! Ambedkar's new and lengthy thesis proceeds as follows: That king Paijavana in Sabhaparva of Mahabharata was a Shudra, that king Paijavana and king Sudas are one and the same, that the descent (race) of Sudas was from Ikshvaku, that the descent of

all the remaining kings who struggled against Brahmins was also from Ikshvaku; hence all the kings who struggled in these stories against the Brahmins were Shudras. Moreover, Ambedkar greatly wonders as to why none of the other researchers have understood the fact that all the kings who struggled against Brahmins were Shudras.

> "Unfortunately, the bearing of these cases on the position of the Shudra has not been realized as fully as it should have been. The reason is that nobody has realized that this conflict was a conflict between Brahmins and Shudras. Sudas definitely was a Shudra. The others although they have not been described as Shudras are described as having been descended from Ikshvaku. Sudas is also described as a descendant of Ikshvaku. There is nothing far-fetched in saying that they were all Shudras. Even Manu had no idea of this. He represents these cases as cases of conflict between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Dr. Muir has failed to realize that Sudas was a Shudra and has in recounting these stories represented that the parties to these conflicts were Brahmins on the one hand and the Kshatriyas on the other. In a sense, it is true that the conflict was between Brahmins and Kshatriyas because the Shudras were also a branch of the Kshatriyas. It would, however, have been far more illuminating if they had been described in more precise terms as conflicts between Brahmins and Shudras. The misunderstanding having been caused, it has remained and has continued to conceal the real nature of so important a part of the history of the Indo-Aryan society. It is to clear this misunderstanding that the heading given to this Chapter is 'Brahmins *versus* Shudras' and not 'Brahmins *versus* Kshatriyas'. Understood as a history of conflict between Brahmins and Shudras, it helps one to understood how the Shudras came to be degraded from the second to the fourth Varna" (Vol.7, p.155).

In the course of learning the history of Indo-Aryans, we have so far gone up to the point of conflicts between Brahmins and the Shudra kings. But here the following question arises immediately: The domination of Brahmins affects all sections in the society of that time, and not merely the Shudras, doesn't it? Ambedkar himself said that this domination will infuriate any decent and self-respecting person, didn't he? Then, why did not others among Kshatriyas or Vysyas come into conflict with Brahmins but only the Shudras? We must seek an answer to this question. Further, we need to check whether Ambedkar has said anything elsewhere contrary to what he said earlier, namely, that all those who had conflicts with the Brahmins were Shudras and that they belonged to Ikshvaku lineage.

2) The Shudras belonged to Solar Line!

Ambedkar's explanation of this point proceeds as follows, as he describes the 'martial spirit' of the Shudras:

"These were enough to infuriate any decent and self-respecting body of men. On the side of the Kshatriya kings they could not be supposed to be willing to take things lying low. How could they? It must not be forgotten that most of the Kshatriya kings who came into conflict with the Brahmins, belonged to the solar line. They differed from the Kshatriyas of the lunar line in learning, in pride and in martial spirit. The Kshatriyas who belonged to the solar line were a virile people, while those who belonged to the lunar line were an imbecile lot without any self-respect. The former challenged the Brahmins. The latter succumbed to them and became their slaves. This was as it should be. For while the Kshatriyas of the lunar line were devoid of any learning, those belonging to the solar line were not merely the equals of Brahmins in the matter of learning, they were their superior. Several of them were the authors of the Vedic hymns and were known as Rajarishis. This was particularly true of those who came into conflict with the Brahmins" (Vol.7, pp. 190-91).

"The most famous Vedic hymn namely the Gayatri mantra is the production of Vishvamitra who was a Kshatriya. It was impossible for the Kshatriyas of this calibre not to take up this challenge of the Brahmins" (Vol. 7, p. 192).

Ambedkar had said earlier that all those who came into conflict with Brahmins were Shudras and that they had descended from Ikshvaku. But now he says that most of the Kshatriya kings who came into conflict with Brahmins belonged to solar line! If people of Ikshvaku descent are Shudras, the people belonging to solar line will be the other Kshatriyas who are not Shudras. This means, in fact, that if most of those who came into conflict with Brahmins belonged to one solar line, they did not belong to the Shudra branch of the Kshatriya Varna. Which of these propositions is correct? What he said earlier or what he is saying now? Which should we consider seriously?

The Kshatriyas of the solar line alone possess everything: learning, scholarship, martial spirit, pride and self-respect! It is pity that Kshatriyas who belonged to lunar line are devoid of all those characteristics. Why does the solar descent give the former their martial spirit? Why does lunar line not give that spirit? Where should we look for the reasons for this distinction? This is surely an intractable problem.

Let us leave the issue of Kshatriyas aside for the moment. What about Vyasyas? If domination by Brahmins will infuriate any decent and self-respecting person, why did it not infuriate Vysyas? The reason is obvious. Thus, we have got the answer to our first question fully. But our other question is, why did other Varnas except the Shudras not come into conflict with Brahmins? Because some of the Kshatriyas did not belong to either

Ikshwaku descent or solar line. Vysyas might not have fought because either they were not 'decent' or 'self-respecting'! Thus, this answer is very satisfactory!

But, now a doubt regarding Vysyas. Ambedkar says that there were Vysyas also among those who composed 'hymns' (Vol. 7, p.191). Well, that apparently doesn't matter! For, they might not be 'decent' persons despite the fact that they composed hymns! This is also true. Well, thus, this doubt is also cleared! But we have another doubt: Ambedkar said that Kshatriyas of solar line became Rajarishis, and some were even 'superior' to Brahmins, didn't he? When Kshatriyas also do whatever Brahmins do, they become the Brahmins' equals; but how can they be superior to Brahmins? In what way are they 'superior' to Brahmins?

A further doubt: If people of solar descent were incapable of fighting against Brahmin domination, how can the population of the present day lower castes who do not belong even to lunar line, fight against the still existing domination of the upper Varnas? Do they have education? Do they have scholarship? Did they compose Vedic hymns? What is the way for them to acquire a militant spirit, pride and self-respect? The conclusion seems unavoidable: that the low-caste population which do not belong to the solar line has no way to wage a conflict.

Further, a fourth doubt: There is a problem with regard to the 'descent of Shudras'. Ambedkar—who said earlier that Sudas was a Shudra, that he belonged to Ikshvaku lineage and all other militant kings too belonged to the same lineage—says at another place that "The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race" (Vol. 7, p. 204). What is this? Do Shudras belong to Ikshvaku race or to the Solar race or to both? Are both the races identical? Or must we conclude that Shudras are great people regardless of their descent since the two races (Ikshvaku and Solar) are very great?

So far, we have considered conflicts between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Apparently, the Kshatriyas caused the Brahmins great tribulation in these conflicts. This is how they did it, according to Ambedkar:

> "Their pride which was born out of their prowess and their learning must have been so greatly wounded by the pretensions of the Brahmins that when they did take up the challenge of the Brahmins they did it in a ruthless spirit. They hit the Brahmins hip and thigh. Vena forced them to worship him and no other god; Pururavas looted their wealth. Nahusha yoked them to his chariot and made them drag it through the city. Nimi flouted the exclusive and hereditary right of a family priest to perform

all the ceremonies in the family and Sudas went to the length of burning alive the son of Vasishtha who was once his family priest. Surely, there cannot be greater cause to provoke the Brahmins to seek their vengeance upon the Shudras" (Vol. 7, p. 192).

Therefore the Brahmins sought vengeance against the violence of Kshatriyas:

"...the technique employed by the Brahmins for this purpose was to refuse to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras. I have no doubt that it is by this technique that the Brahmins accomplished their end and thereby wreaked their vengeance upon the Shudras" (Vol. 7, p.157).

What does 'Upanayana' mean? What does one lose if it is not performed? Was it being performed for all people at one time, then? Ambedkar discusses all these questions at length.

'Upanayana' once meant only teaching the Gayatri mantra. 'Sutradharana' (Yagnopavita) means putting the 'sacred' thread around the neck. Once these two activities used to take place separately. In later periods, they merged into a single ceremony. The religious literature tells that Upananayana was once performed in the case of all men and women of all the three Varnas:

"In addition to circumstantial evidence and the evidence of the authors mentioned before, the Sanskara Ganapati cited by Max Muller contains an express provision declaring the Shudra to be eligible for Upanayana" (Vol. 7, p. 169).

In subsequent ages, in the case of women, Upanayana ceased to exist as an independent ceremony and merged with marriage. But Upanayana was denied to Shudra because the Brahmins stopped performing it for them. According to the rules of Purva Mimamsa, the right to study the Vedas and the right to perform a sacrifice are open only to those persons who have undergone the Upanayana ceremony. Persons with these rights will also have the 'right to property'. If a person does not undergo Upanayana, he must lose his right to study and right to property. That is, surely, the loss of all privileges:

"Once the relation of Upananayana to education and property is grasped, all difficulty in accepting the thesis that the degradation of the Shudra was entirely due to loss of Upanayana must vanish... Without Upanayana, a person was doomed to social degradation, to ignorance and to poverty. The stoppage of Upanayana was a most deadly weapon discovered by the Brahmins to avenge themselves against the Shudras. It had the effect of an atomic bomb" (Vol. 7, p. 172).

"Once it was denied to the Shudras, its possession became a matter of honour and its denial a badge of servility....It made the Shudras look

up to the higher classes as their superiors and enabled the three higher classes to look down upon the Shudras as their inferiors" (Vol. 7, p.171).

Well, then, did any attempts of reconciliation take place between Brahmins and Shudras? Such attempts, if they did occur, obviously did not yield results.

To show that Brahmins had the right to perform or to deny Upanayanas, Ambedkar cited the example of Shivaji. Though the conflict that took place between Brahmins and Shivaji does not relate to ancient times, we can consider it as a piece of evidence:

> "Shivaji after having established a Hindu independent kingdom in the western part of Maharashtra thought of proclaiming himself a king by having his coronation performed" (Vol. 7, p. 175).

But Brahmins refused to perform coronation on the ground that Shivaji was not a Kshatriya but a Shudra, that a Shudra is not qualified for Upanayana, and that they would not perform coronation for a person who has not undergone Upanayana. In response, Shivaji showed a genealogy to prove that he was a Kshatriya. A Brahmin named Gagabhat accepted a great deal of money and performed coronation for Shivaji. It seems easy enough to split Brahmins if you throw some money at them. In Ambedkar's own words:

> "The support of the Brahmins for the performance of Upanayana need not be based on honest grounds. It could be purchased by money. Shivaji got the support of the Brahmin Gagabhat on payment of money" (Vol.7, p. 185).

Ambedkar cited the example from the recent past of Shivaji to show that one can imagine the nature of the domination of Brahmins in the ancient times. But this example raises a question: were the Shudras not able to obtain the services of any one section of the Brahmins by some means and make them perform Upanayana for them? Ambedkar raises a similar question and answers it thus:

> "But it is clear that even in the times of the Rig Veda, Brahmins were a class by themselves, had developed class consciousness and were keen on maintaining class interests. In that event it would have been difficult for the Shudras to break up the conspiracy of the Brahmins" (Vol. 7, p. 202).

In one place, Ambedkar says that "the support of the Brahmins need not be based on honest grounds and it could be purchased by money"; and here he says that it would have been 'difficult for the Shudras to break up the conspiracy of the Brahmins!

What must have happened finally in the case of Shudras is this:

> "Owing to the denial of *Upanayana*, the *Shudras* who were Kshatriyas became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the *Vaishyas* and thus came to form the fourth *Varna*" (Vol. 7, p. 12).

Shudras, who until then constituted a branch within Kshatriya Varna, lost all their rights including the right to property and became poor. The Shudra kings, the Shudra ministers, the Shudra rich—everyone became poor. Thus emerged the Shudra Varna. The three Varnas became four. This is the new theory which Ambedkar elaborated in his book titled *Who were the Shudras?*

At some places, Ambedkar says that it was Shudra branch of Kshatriyas who fought with Brahmins, and at other places he observes that the learned Kshatriyas could not tolerate the domination of Brahmins, that all Kshatriyas fought against Brahmins. Yet he concludes that the Shudra branch of Kshatriyas alone changed into Shudra Varna and all the remaining Kshatriyas remained the second Varna. How can one reconcile this inconsistency?

3) Those Shudras are different!

When we look at a book titled *Who were the Shudras?*, we expect that it will discuss the origin of the present-day Shudras also, don't we? In fact this essay begins with words that suggest such a possibility. But at the end it concluded that there is no relationship between the present-day Shudras and the Shudras of the past! Before looking at Ambedkar's conclusion, it is necessary to look at what the book proposes at the very beginning:

> "Under the system of *Chaturvarnya*, the *Shudra* is not only placed at the bottom of the gradation but he is subjected to innumerable ignominies and disabilities so as to prevent him from rising above the condition fixed for him by law...the *Shudras* form about 75 to 80 per cent of the population of Hindus. A treatise which deals with so vast a population cannot be considered to be dealing with a trivial problem" (Vol. 7, p.9).

'So vast a population' means Shudras of the present day. This means that *Who were the Shudras?* must discuss the present day Shudras who constitute 80% of the population today. There was obviously a code that decreed their status. "How such a Code came into being, cannot therefore be regarded as of mere antiquarian interest to the Shudras of to-day" (Vol. 7, p. 11), says Ambedkar. This means, the present-day Shudras should not consider that they would not look at the argument of this book simply

out of historical curiosity. Surely, it is related to their present lives in fundamental ways. Ambedkar himself claims that

> "the book is written for the ignorant and the uninformed *Shudras*, who do not know how they came to be what they are" (Vol. 7, p.18).

Thus this book begins with the promise that it would historically derive how the present day Shudra population have reached their present stage. Look at the conclusion we reach by the time we come to the end of the book:

> "...the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan Society are absolutely different in race from the Shudras of the Hindu Society. The Shudras of the Hindu Society are not the racial descendants of the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan Society....In the Indo-Aryans the word Shudra was the proper name of one single people. It was the name of a people who belonged to a particular race. The word Shudra, as used in the Hindu society, is not a proper name at all. It is an epithet for a low uncultured class of people. It is a general cognomen of a miscellaneous and heterogeneous collection of tribes and groups, who have nothing in common except that they happen to be on a lower plane of culture. It is a pity that these innocent and backward people of later days have been rolled up with the original Shudras and subjected to the same penalties for which they had given no cause" (Vol. 7, 200-1).

How should we understand the statement that there is no connection between the Shudras of those days and the Shudras of the present-days? Now, Ambedkar says that there is no connection between those Shudras and these Shudras in terms of 'descent', 'race', 'living conditions' or 'culture'. If there is no such link that transformed the Shudras of that time into contemporary Shudras, how can this book be concerned with the present day Shudras? Ambedkar claims, however, that this book does not simply constitute history but is written with a view to knowing how the vast population of contemporary Shudras came to their degraded status. But how can the degradation of the past Shudras be the basis for the degradation of the present-day Shudras if the past Shudras are not the ancestors of present-day Shudras? Well, this means, the Shudra Varna of the ancient system of four Varnas is not the ancestor of the present-day Shudras! This books then, does not really concern the origins of the present day Shudras. If that is so, how is this research useful to the present-day Shudras? What should the present-day Shudras learn from it? If they want to make the claim that their "ancestors ruled the kingdoms as kings and ministers", there is no basis here whatsoever. Then why did the writer say that this book was written to enable present day Shudras to know 'how they came to be what they are'?

So far, already, many unanswerable questions have arisen concerning Ambedkar's theory. There is still another question before which all other questions pale: 'Can the upper Varnas at least exist on their own?'

4) Can the upper Varnas exist without a Servant Varna?

In religious texts, we find restrictions that Shudras should not study Vedas, perform sacrifices and acquire property. But in the same texts we find descriptions that Shudras were kings, that they performed sacrifices and composed Vedic hymns. Does it mean that those who were forbidden to acquire property could rule kingdoms? Does it mean that those who were forbidden learning could contribute to the composition of Vedic literature? Ambedkar asks the same kind of questions: The religious texts said that Shudras were forbidden to study Vedas, didn't they? Then how could they say that Sudas, a Shudra king wrote hymns? They said that Shudras had no right to officiate at sacrifices, didn't they? Then how could they accept a Shudra to officiate sacrifices in Satapatha Brahmana? In these questions, Ambedkar implied to say that restrictions on Shudras did not exist at first. In the beginning, Shudras were part of three Varna system. That is why, there are examples in religious literature that Shudras were great people. Restrictions were introduced at some later time. Examples of restrictions were then added to literature. Hence we find two kinds of examples with reference to Shudras. Based on this reasoning, we are to understand that Shudras constituted an upper Varna at one time.

There is nothing to oppose the suggestion that there used to be rich persons even among Shudras just as there were rich persons among Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vysyas. But Ambedkar's theory does not stop at that point. With a view to say that 'Shudras were also part of upper Varna and not a servant class', he made a formulation that 'there were only three Varnas in the society at one time. All the three were the upper Varnas. There was no servant Varna'. But he was not bothered to note that it was odd and inconsistent not to find Servant Varna in a society where there were the 'upper' Varnas. The question is not into how many sections the society of the time was divided. If all the existing sections were of a superior level, who would perform the 'services' they needed? When there are such 'great' people as ministers, kings and Rajarishis who yet do not have servants, will they do their chores for themselves? Will his Royal Highness, the King, get down into the field and till the land for his food? Will his Excellency, the minister, graze the cows for himself for milk? Will the reverend Rajarishi makes himself a carriage for his travel and drive it for himself? Surely a numerous class of servants is needed

to carry on these services at home and outside for the sake of rich people who do not perform any labour? How will the propertied and wealthy classes form if there is no section that performs labour? In fact, 'wealth' means mass of labour exacted from labourers. Superior Varnas could not have formed if there were no labourers. Absence of section of servants is possible if there is some society where there is no such thing as 'upper Varna' and where the entire population performs labour. But it is utterly a non-sensible imagination to assume that there was no servant Varna in a society where there were such upper Varnas as Shudra kings, ministers, pundits and wealthy people whom Ambedkar describes. Therefore, existence of servant Varna is obligatory and invariable in any society where there are upper Varnas. The name of those servants would be something else if not 'Shudras'. If the upper Varnas are three and if we add servant Varna to it, there would be four Varnas in total.

Is a society which Ambedkar describes consisting exclusively of the upper Varnas meaningless or not?

5) Research that revolves around 'Genealogy'!

'Everybody says that Shudras do not have particular rights. Why doesn't any one think of the reasons why they don't have those rights?'— This is what Ambedkar asks. Well, then, what did Ambedkar himself think about it regardless of whether others thought or not? What did he discover? He discovered that Shudras lost all their rights due to the stoppage of Upanayanas for them.

But, even according to Ambedkar, Brahmins had special rights during the period in which Shudras also existed as part of the upper Varna system when all people were eligible for Upanayanas. Well, did Ambedkar think about this question? Though he said that Brahmins had particular privileges, did he think why they had those privileges?

When Shudras or other Varnas do not have equal rights, when Brahmins or some other class has privileges, and if someone then raises the cry: 'why do these people have privileges' or 'why do we have no privileges', the answer would simply be: 'because of the Varna system'! It would have to be the 'Varna system' or 'class system', which promote and perpetuate hierarchical differences among sections of society. Whatever be the name given to such a system! If the living conditions and rights or privileges of all Varnas are equal, it won't be Varna system. It would be a Varna-less system.

Whether we call a social subdivision 'Varna' or 'class', when we

raise the question as to 'when these distinctions began', we have to go back to the time when conflicts among ancient tribes began for the sake of natural resources. People of the subsequent periods may not be in a position to know which tribe fought with which tribe, when and in which region.' But such conflicts alone mark the beginning of human history. Victories and defeats inevitably follow such conflicts. Labour processes and labour relations too begin. Gradually slavery and masterhood begin. Property in land and exploitation of labour begin. Previously non-existing phenomenon called 'administration' meant to suppress class of slaves begins. Laws and punishments for slaves begin. Kings and kingdoms come into being. We have to imagine this ancient history that brought about these consequences. This is the process in which conflicting classes emerged. The basis of this process is 'exploitation of labour'.

Ownership of property under Varna system gives few masterhood over servants. It is natural, then, that servants should not have the rights which masters have. Thus the answer to the question 'why do the upper Varnas have privileges'? also provides the answer to the question 'why does the servant Varna not have rights?'

To the question, 'why do Varnas of owners have privileges, the answer is 'because those are Varnas of property owners'. It is a different issue if there are hierarchical differences within the Varnas of owners as well. To the question 'why does the servant Varna not have rights'? the answer is, 'because it is the labouring, propertyless servant Varna'!

The research takes a right direction only if we raise the question 'why do masters and servants exist or why do the upper Varnas and lower Varnas exist?

The distinctions among Varnas are facts that are open for all to confirm. Research is not needed to allow us to mention that 'there are distinctions'. Research is needed only to find out why there are distinctions. This should be the task of any study of this subject. Ambedkar's study does recognize the distinctions between Varnas. But, it does not see the basis of the Varna distinctions in terms of 'labour relations'. He attempts to find it in terms of religious paraphernalia like Upanayanas, sacred threads and sacrifices. Though his work mentions the property right as well, this right depends on the privilege of Upanayanas only. Property, according to this research, does not have more power than that (dependence on Upanayanas). Even His Royal Highness the King too becomes a pauper if he does not undergo Upanayana. What happens to his land if he is deprived of the right to the sacred thread is beyond anybody's imagination. Ambedkar mentions mainly three textual sources as the basis for his explanation of the origin of the Shudra Varna.

1. Some religious texts mention only three Varnas and do not mention the Shudra Varna.

2. Some religious texts mention Shudra kings and ministers.

3. Some religious texts mention that, at one time, Shudras also underwent Upanayanas.

Owing to these sources, Ambedkar assumed and theorized that Shudras too must have existed as an upper Varna at one time and only later must have been deprived of the privilege of Upanayanas and hence turned into the servant Varna. Pointing to his theory, he says very confidently that even if a chain of his theory breaks down, the remaining chains are quite capable of sustaining the weight of his theory (Vol.7, p. 206).

But are these chains so strong?

1) Let us suppose that some religious texts mentioned only three upper Varnas and did not mention the servant Varna. Do we, based on this, come to the conclusion that there were only the upper Varnas and there was no servant Varna in society? If a person understands the matter in this way, it means that he does not have even common sense about the basic composition of any society. How can a servant Varna be absent in a society where there are kings, ministers and a few wealthy people? We can't blame little kids who do not raise this question but we have to blame persons who crossed ten years. One has to imagine some other reason if Shudra Varna does not appear in religious texts. That imagination too is of no use if it is like the present assumption. It should be a correct one. If we can't imagine anything, we have to leave it. Do we, therefore, conclude that the servant Varna did not exist at that time and propose it as a theory?

2) In some religious texts are mentioned Shudra kings and ministers. Will this, however, prove that Shudra kings alone were noble and capable kings and that they alone came into conflict with Brahmins?

3) Let us suppose that Shudras at one time were permitted to undergo Upanayanas. Why were they later deprived of Upanayanas? Because they had come into conflict with Brahmins. Why did Shudras alone engage in conflict? Because they belonged to the Solar race!

These are the chains that have to sustain the weight of Ambedkar's theory! Which of these chains is strong? No chain has the strength of a piece of a thread either.

But Ambedkar, while claiming that his theory is correct, is impatient with other researchers because none of them has correctly explained the origins of Shudra Varna.

Looking at the examples in religious texts which in certain contexts say that Shudras do not have rights and which in certain other contexts also say that Shudras were wealthy, Ambedkar does ask some questions with regard to the contradictory nature of religious texts. Ambedkar seriously marvels at other scholars' failure to raise such questions he raised; he is surprised that, given the information which religious texts provide, they could not catch the point that 'Shudras too were an upper Varna' at one time. Here is his argument:

> "How can these riddles be explained? Neither the orthodox Hindu nor the modern scholar has attempted to explain them. Indeed they do not seem to be aware of the fact that such riddles exist. The orthodox Hindu does not bother about them. He is content with the divine explanation contained in the *Purusha Sukta* that the Shudra was born from the feet of the Purusha. The modern scholar is content with the assumption that the Shudra in his origin is a non-Aryan aboriginal, for whom the Aryan quite naturally prescribed a different code of laws. It is a pity that none of these classes of people have cared to acquaint themselves with the riddles which surround the problem of the Shudra, much less have they thought of suggesting a theory of the origin of the position of the Shudra capable of solving them. With regard to my thesis it will be seen that it can explain everyone of these riddles" (Vol. 7, p. 208).

We have seen in detail what his explanations are and how they solve the riddles.

While discussing any problem, Ambedkar talks about his discussion as something very special or to put it in other words in an exaggerated fashion. After summing up the essence of his theory in four or five sentences in the preface to his essay, *Who were Shudras?* and much before readers come to know about his theory in detail, Ambedkar claims:

> "My critics will have to admit that the book is rich in fresh insights and new visions" (Vol. 7, p. 12).

He immediately dives into the realm of the imagination thus:

> "I must of course await the verdict of scholars on these conclusions... Apart from scholars, how the Hindu public will react may be an interesting speculation" (Vol. 7, p.12).

All the doubts should be cleared before 'public' respond to it in any manner, one supposes. But Ambedkar continues to speculate before clearing these doubts:

> "What the Orthodox Hindu will say about this book I can well imagine for I have been battling with him all these years" (Vol. 7, p. 14).

"The book treads heavily on the toes of the Arya Samajists. My conclusions have come in sharp conflict with their ideology at two most important points. The Arya Samajists believe that the four *Varnas* of the Indo-Aryan society have been in existence from the very beginning. The book shows that there was a time when there were only three *Varnas* in the Indo-Aryan society. The Arya Samajists believe that the *Vedas* are eternal and sacrosanct. The book shows that portions of the *Vedas* at any rate, particularly the *Purusha Sukta,* which is the mainstay of the Arya Samajists, are fabrications by *Brahmins* intended to serve their own purposes. Both these conclusions are bound to act like atomic bombs on the dogmas of the Arya Samajists" (Vol. 7, pp. 13-14).

Do you need atom bombs to answer those who praise Vedas? Aren't broomsticks enough to do that?

Recalling the 'newness' in his research, Ambedkar exclaims over it in the middle of his essay thus:

"What does Shudra signify? In the light of this new discovery that Sudas was a Shudra, the word now stands in a totally different light. To old scholars to whom the word was just the name of a servile and aboriginal class this new discovery must come as a surprise for which their past researches cannot possibly furnish an answer" (Vol.7, p. 130).

What is the new meaning that we have to give to the word 'Shudra'? Can we say that Shudra means a king? Even if the present day Shudras want to claim and feel happy that their ancestors too were kings, Ambedkar himself claimed that there was no connection between those Shudras and these Shudras! Then what new meaning do these Shudras attach to their current status?

Ambedkar himself tells us that

"a thesis which demands acceptance must not only suggest a solution, but must also show that the solution it proposes answers the riddles which surround the problem which it claims to have solved" (Vol. 7, p. 207).

This is, surely, true. But is this theory able to answer all the riddles connected with the question of Shudras? Has he been able to say anything enlightening about either the present-day Shudras or their ancestors? Can his proposition at all be called a theory of the origin of the present-day Shudras? Yet he can say:

"I am sure that my thesis cannot be discredited and demolished in such an easy manner" (Vol. 7, p. 205).

In so many ways, Ambedkar claims success with such confidence. Yet once again, suddenly, he remembers conventional modesty and obedience here and there; at one place, he says:

"As for myself I am in no better position" (Vol. 7, p. 130).

At another place:

"While I am convinced that my thesis is sound, it would be over confident to think that there will not be found persons who will not raise objections to it" (Vol. 7, p. 161).

At a third place he says:

"I do not claim absolute certainty for my thesis" (Vol. 7, p. 206).

When he is able to claim that his theory is capable of answering all the riddles, why does he not come out and say thus: 'I can prove what I say to be correct. Come on, let us discuss?'

In fact, Ambedkar must have suffered from doubt regarding the viability of his arguments! That is why he says that he too is in the same position, that it would be overconfident for to think that no one will raise objections to his theory. When he is not sure why should he start in a grand and clarion style right from the beginning? Even a person who has discovered a great theory, he need not make exaggerated claims. If he has some doubt about his theory, if he feels that adequate and sound proof is not available, his arguments should be expressed in measured language accordingly. He has to present his arguments thus: 'I am making the following assumptions. I have such and such evidence. You may think along these lines'.

If he says on the one hand that he won't claim absolute certainty for his thesis and on the other hand if he starts with a big noise that his 'book is rich in fresh insights and new visions' and that it would 'act like an atomic bomb' on so and so people, what value will that grand style have?

Having made exaggerated claims throughout the book and exhibited modesty here and there, he finally concluded thus:

"Indeed there is no riddle which the thesis does not solve. The thesis if I may say so, is a close and a perfect fit. Few theses can therefore have a better little deed than this" (Vol. 7, p. 209).

Aren't there riddles which this theory is unable to answer? What 'in fact' are the riddles which it has answered? What is the difference between the theory of Brahma's feet and theory of Solar race?

Is it a scientific research that revolves around Solar race, Lunar race and Ikshwaku race?

If the theory of victory of the Aryan race—which assumes that population of one region invaded the people of another region and turned

them into slaves—is useless and 'must be thrown on the scrap heap', is Ambedkar's theory—which is based on notions like the victory of Solar race and Upanayanas—more worthy to be considered seriously? If we throw his theory too on to the same scrap heap beside the Aryan race theory, is it not its appropriate place?

3 'BRAHMINICAL' LITERATURE OR 'FEUDAL' LITERATURE?

Vedas are the core of Hindu religious literature. While observing that Brahmins composed some parts of Vedas and Kshatriyas, Vysyas and Shudras composed certain other parts, Ambedkar cites the following examples:

> "...the following hymns are said to have been composed by the under mentioned kings" (Vol. 7, p. 191).

Here Ambedkar mentions the name of the Shudra king Sudas along with such other names as Bharadvaja and Sindhuvipa. Next,

> "Manu Vaivasvata, Ida, king *Pururavas*, these are to be known as the eminent utterers of hymns among the Kshatriyas. Bhalanda, Vandya, and Sanskirti these are always to be known as the three eminent persons among the Vysyas who were composers of hymns. Thus ninety-one persons have been declared by whom hymns have been given birth to, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas" (Vol. 7, p. 191).

Ambedkar, however, also adds the following:

> "In the list of the authors of the Vedic hymns there are not only names of many Kshatriyas, there are names of many of the Kshatriyas who had come into conflict with the Brahmins. The Kshatriyas were the leaders among the Vedic hymn makers. The most famous Vedic hymn namely the Gayatri mantra is the production of Vishvamitra who was a Kshatriya. It was impossible for the Kshatriyas of this calibre not to take up this challenge of the Brahmins" (Vol. 7, P. 192).

We have already seen earlier that this Vishvamitra was a Shudra, that all the Kshatriyas who fought against Brahmins were also Shudras, that those became Rajarishis who composed Vedic hymns and that they had even surpassed Brahmins.

Now, the main feature of the four-Varna system is that the Shudras served the first three upper Varnas. Yet Ambedkar characterizes the

religious literature which the four-Varna system preaches as brahminical literature:

> "It is a literature which is almost entirely the creation of the Brahmins. Secondly, its whole object is to sustain the superiority and privileges of the Brahmins as against the non-Brahmins... The *Brahmin* scholar has a two-fold interest in the maintenance of the sanctity of this literature. In the first place being the production of his forefathers his filial duty leads him to defend it even at the cost of truth" (Vol. 7, pp. 16-17).

The question here is: can we say that this literature is entirely a creation of Brahmins and it is production of their forefathers?

According to Ambedkar's explanation, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vysyas and Shudras (when Shudras constituted a branch within the Kshatriya Varna) created this literature. Then how could it be "entirely a creation of the Brahmins?"

Another question: Is this scriptural literature aimed at sustaining the superiority and privileges of the Brahmins alone? No. After the formation of the Shudra Varna, the Shudras were expected to serve not only the Brahmin Varna but also the Kshatriya and Vysya Varnas. We have already seen, for instance, that these three Varnas could possess property but Shudras were denied property rights and that any upper Varna person could kill a Shudra without paying any compensation. This means that not the Brahmin Varna alone opposed the Shudra Varna but Kshatriya and Vysya Varnas did as well. Will the literature that supports the three upper Varnas be 'upper Varna' literature or simply Brahminical literature?

It was not the Brahmin Varna alone which created that literature. Nor is it the Brahmin Varna alone which benefits from that literature. Hence, Shudras would be able to correctly identify their opponents only when we characterize that literature as 'upper Varna' literature and not as 'Brahminical' literature.

It is a different issue if there are hierarchical differences among those upper Varnas. It is a problem connected with the lower Varnas within those upper Varnas. It is not a problem of Shudras.

All Varnas that stand as Masters over Shudras are essentially the same. We need not, in this case, excuse any one of them. The relation between the master and the servant is a relation in which the servant performs the labour necessary for the subsistence of the master. Any master is a master irrespective of whether he is a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya or even a Shudra master. If Ambedkar wanted to 'educate' "the ignorant and the uniformed Shudras, who do not know how they came to be what they are", he has to introduce the concept of 'upper Varna literature'.

Indeed, the term 'upper Varna literature' is not entirely appropriate either. Here we would need to make it a practice to use the term 'feudal literature'. Because the upper Varnas enjoy privileges due to their 'landed property'. A master is one who has such property. Those who do not possess that property are labourers under the master. All the rules found in scriptural literature that appears as Brahminical literature defend the relations of landed property. Owing to this fact, that literature becomes the 'literature of the feudal class' or 'feudal literature'. If we want to 'educate' Shudras, it is of no use to reiterate the inadequate and misleading term 'Brahminical literature!' It won't educate Shudras properly.

1) Fascination for religious rituals

Ambedkar, it appears, enjoyed elaborating upon religious rituals. To put it more aptly, he goes into a state of ecstasy while describing rituals. Keeping aside the fact that such details are more or less irrelevant to real life, they are not relevant to his investigation either. He could have confined himself to mention of such things very briefly according to context. But Ambedkar was not so easily satisfied. For example, if we look at the details that he gave while describing 'upanayanas', we would understand the extent of his obsession:

> "The best way to give an idea of Upanayana is to give a description of the ceremony" (Vol. 7, p. 156).

The description of the ritual begins thus and continues for about 6 further pages (pp: 156-161 in Vol. 7).

> "As a rite *Upanayana* was originally a very simple ceremony. The boy came to the teacher with a *samidh* (a grass blade) in his hand and told the teacher that he desired to become a Brahmachary (i.e. a student) and begged the teacher to allow him to stay with him for purposes of study. At a later date it became a very elaborate ceremony" (Vol. 7, p. 156).

Ambedkar points to this information in the Ashvalayana Griha Sutra and then begins to describe the process:

> "Let him initiate the boy who is decked, whose hair (on the head) is shaved (and arranged), who wears a new garment or an antelope skin if a Brahmana, ruru skin if a Kshatriya, a goat's skin if a Vaishya; if they put on garments they should put on dyed ones, reddish-yellow, red and yellow (for a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya respectively); they should have girdles and staffs (as described above). While the boy takes hold of (the hand of) his teacher, the latter offers (a homa of clarified butter oblations) in the fire (as described above), and seats himself to the north of the fire with his face turned to the east, while the other one (the boy) stations himself in front (of the teacher) with his face turned

to the west. The teacher then fills the folded hands of both himself and of the boy with water and with the verse 'we choose that of Savitri' (Rg.V. 82.1) the teacher drops down the water in his won folded hands on to the water in the folded hands of the boy; having thus poured the water, he should seize with his own hand the boys's hand together with the thumb (of the boy) with the formula 'by the urge (or order) of the god Savitri, with the arms of the two Ashvins, with the hands of Pushan, I seize thy hand, oh so, and so,' with the words 'Savitri has seized thy hand, oh so and so' a second time (the teacher seizes the boy's hand) with the words 'Agni is thy teacher oh so·and so' a third time. The teacher should cause (the boy) to look at the sun, while the teacher repeats 'God savitri, this is thy brahmachari protect him..." (Vol. 7, p.156-57).

Here we find a description of the chanting of another mantra:

"...(the teacher) should cause him to turn round to the right and with his two hands placed over (the boy's) shoulders he should touch the place of the boy's heart repeating the latter half (of Rg. III. 8.4). Having wiped the ground round the fire, the brahmachari should put (on the fire) a fuel stick silently,..." (Vol. 7, p. 157).

Again another mantra! The student ends it by saying 'svaha' and wipes his face thrice! Again a long mantra! The student bends his knees, embraces the teacher's feet and says to him 'recite, sir, recite, sir, the Savitri'. At this point, we find all such details as whether the teacher lays his hand with fingers upturned or reverse and how the student stands, how many fuel sticks he has to offer to Agni (the fire) and so on! Ambedkar also tells us that

"He (the student) should beg (food) in the evening and the morning; he should put a fuel stick (on fire) in the evening and morning. That (which he has received by begging) he should announce to the teacher; he should not sit down (but should be standing) the rest of the day" (Vol. 7, p. 158).

The Upanayana concludes only after such a long ritual. This is to initiate a person in the study of the Vedas.

The absence of any mention of thread called '*Yajnopavita*' in this ceremony of Upanayana astonished all pundits: Why was it absent? This became a serious social problem for them! All of them participated in the discussion in their books with a variety of arguments. These mantras and those mantras, always mantras and more mantras, Upanayana, *Yajnopavita*, mantra, yanopavita, mantra!

These kinds of things excite our pundit Ambedkar a lot! He had 'boiled and strained off' the mantras and wars of mantras of all the pundits; that is, he had himself mastered the whole debate. He became an expert

in this matter. Ambedkar says that pundit Tilak had offered an explanation that *Yajnopavita* (the sacred thread) was non-existent at one time—If that is true, then let's be grateful to God for there were no threads around the necks of the Brahmin children at the time of their birth—that it came at a later time, that it came in a particular period of time and in a particular manner. Ambedkar was fascinated by that explanation but he was slightly dissatisfied with it: "[the]explanation by Mr. Tilak is no doubt very interesting. But it does not help to explain some of the difficulties", saying thus Ambedkar claimed how skillfully and delicately he would solve these riddles. He did investigate many religious texts for the purpose. Finally, it appears, he got hold of the secret. For he himself concluded that the Upanayana came into existence to answer a certain need while *Yajnopavita* was invented for a different need. Well, we do not know whether all the Brahmin pundits felt happy over this explanation.

(1) Yagnopavita

If we bend an ear close to the 'holy' words about *Yajnopavita*, we can understand how deep Ambedkar's interest was in that study of such religious matters:

> "The *Yajnopavita* should have three threads, each thread to be of nine strands well twisted. One *tantu* (strand) stands for one devata (deity). The *Yajnopavita* should reach as far as the navel, should not reach beyond the navel, nor should it be above the chest. A person could wear more than one *Yajnopavita*. A man must always wear Yajnopavita. If he took his meals without wearing the Yajnopavita placed on the right ear, he had to undergo prayascitta, viz., to bathe, to mutter prayers and fast. Wearing of another's Yajnopavita along with several other things (such as shoes, ornament, garland and kamandalu) is forbidden. Three ways of wearing the Yajnopavita are recognized: (1) nivita, (2) pracinavita and (3) upavita. When the cord is carried over the neck, both shoulders and the chest and is held with both the thumbs (of the two hands) lower than the region of the heart and above the navel, it is called *nivita*. Suspending the cord over the left shoulder in such a way that it hangs down on his right side, it becomes *upavita*. Suspending it on his right shoulder in such a way that it hangs down on his left side, it becomes *pracinavita*" (Vol. 7, p. 158-9).

In this manner, details continue to arrive in his writing so regularly that they may put readers to sleep. This kind of clutter of details might be found in the religious texts themselves. Is it necessary, however, to gather all of them for the sake of Shudras? What will anyone learn from these details? Whose shelter is going to collapse if there are no sacred threads with three and nine strands? What harm will come to anybody if

there were no Yajnopavita at all? A person may require a string to tie round his waist in order to tighten the underwear but what is the utility of a Yajnopavita? And, in any case, how this become a weighty a social problem?

The Yajnopavita is merely a symbol of the superiority of the upper Varnas. Hence, any Shudra person should feel only contempt for it. One should create contempt also among those who believe it to be sacred. Even if we consider it for the sake of discussion, we must not overdo it. Or, if we have to tell the details, we have to talk about them critically thus: 'Look, how useless these things are!' But nowhere do we find in Ambedkar a critical attitude toward religious rituals. Nowhere do we find any logic or illuminating comments on them. Moreover, Ambedkar has lot of interest in and lot of attraction for the rituals and ceremonies which Brahmins describe!

In order to know how crazy are the contents in the religious texts, some one who is interested in them should do the job of reading them (since everyone cannot read all those things for themselves). At many places, we may even feel pity for Ambedkar, who performed that 'drudgery'. It will be of some use to the reader if the writer narrates them with vehement opposition to the religious obscurantism; but what will the readers learn if the narrator is carried away by idle curiosity and enjoys describing these details, making no more than a few brief comments? In Ambedkar, we find such references not once or twice. We find similar discussion and similar research on all the aspects—all those senseless things—which are found in the Hindu religious texts!

(2) Kaliyuga

Look, for example, at Ambedkar's discussion of 'Kali Yuga' (Vol.4, pp: 288-322). When did Kali Yuga begin? How long will it last? When will it end? Such is the concern of the discussion! The able intellect of Ambedkar all focussed on this discussion! Here is an example:

> "When did the present Kali Yuga begin? There are two different answers to the question. According to the Aitreya Brahmana it began with Nabhanedishta son of Vaivasvata Manu. According to the Puranas it began on the death of Krishna after the battle of Mahabharata. The first has been reduced to time term by Dr. Shyamshastry who says that Kali Yuga began in 3101 B.C. The second has been worked out by Mr. Gopal Aiyer with meticulous care. His view is that the Mahabharata War commenced on the 14th of October and ended in the night of 31st October 1194 B.C. He places the death of Krishna 16 years after the close of the war basing his conclusion on the ground that Parikshit was 16 when

> he was installed on the throne and reading it with the connected facts namely that the Pandavas went of Mahaprasthan immediately after installing Parikshit on the throne and this they did on the very day Krishna died. This gives 1177 B.C. as the date of the commencement of the Kali Yuga. We have thus two different dates for the commencement of the Kali Yuga 3101 B.C. and 1177 B.C. This is the first riddle about the Kali Yuga" (Vol. 4, p. 291).

Should every one arrive at the same calculation with regard to 'Kali Yuga'? Has this anything to do with science? In the case of 'science', we find 'reason' and that reason will be the same whoever talks about it, if all people grasp that reason. But 'Kali Yuga' is a puranic myth. It consists of puranic language. People imagine what they like regarding such myths. Each person will have his own hobby-horse in such matters. How can estimates coincide in such matters? When we ask 'how many days are there in a year', calculations of all persons should be identical, being based on the time that takes for the earth to revolve around the sun. But what is the calculation according to which we may answer the question 'how many days does Kali Yuga consist of?' There, we don't find any 'reason'. Fictitious things which are not based on 'reason' occur with many variations. It is natural for them to exist like that. Hence, there is no 'riddle' if the calculations regarding the Kali Yuga are different.

There is another aspect of this issue: 'when is the Kali Yuga going to end?' Ambedkar conducts another discussion on this aspect:

> "According to the Vishnu Purana: 'The Kritayuga comprises 4000 years, the Treta 3000; the Dwapara 2000 and the Kali 1000" (Vol. 4, p. 293).

Will these Yugas repeat again and again after these 10 thousand years are over or will 'time' itself cease to exist? Scholars do not say anything about this. Nor does Ambedkar consider this question.

Ambedkar's attempt is to prove that 'Kali Yuga had ended a long time ago'. His argument is as follows: According to Vishnu Purana Kali Yuga comprises a thousand years only. According to the calculation of Gopal Aiyer, Kali Yuga started in 1177 B.C. However, this means that, by the time a thousand years passed, that is by the year 177 B.C, Kali Yuga had ended. Or, according to the calculation of Gargacharya, the Astronomer, the Kali Yuga ended by 165 B.C. Chapters 188 and 190 of Vana Parva of Mahabharata nearly confirm Gargacharya's calculation. Two transitional periods called Sandhya and Sandhyamsa are added before and after each Yuga. Thus, another period of 200 years may be added to Kali Yuga. Its total duration will be 1200 years. The Kali Yuga, may have, thus, ended in the first century A.D.

But, Vedic Brahmins argue that Kali Yuga is not yet over and it is still continuing. Showing all this, Ambedkar alleges that they say so for their selfish ends. Brahmins argue that 'human' calculation and 'divine' calculation of 'time' are not identical. One human year is equal to one divine day only. Which means, 360 human days are equal to 1 divine day. One divine year is equal to 360 human years. This means that Kali Yuga will end only when 1200 divine years are over! So,

1	divine day	=	1 human year.
1	divine year	=	360 human years.
1200	divine years	=	4,32,000 human years.

Following the calculations of Gopal Aiyer or Gargacharya, then, if we assume that Kali Yuga began around 1100 B.C, it will end later only after 4 lakh 32 thousand years! Hence, it means Kali Yuga has barely begun. All this is the calculation of Brahmins!

This way of calculating the duration of the Kali Yuga by Brahmins infuriated Ambedkar a lot. 'Kali Yuga had ended a long time ago. Look how bullying are the Brahmins!', says Ambedkar.

He becomes furious with the Brahmins:

"... a new innovation was made... the Vedic Brahmins instead of declaring the end of Kali Yuga in 165 B.C. as the astronomer had said, extended its life" (Vol. 4, p. 294).

What accusation is this? What logic is this? How can Brahmins, however great they may be, extend time? Can they, out of their selfishness or wickedness, change a year into 400 days instead of 360 days? Can they make the earth revolve around the sun 400 times in a year? How can they extend the Kali Yuga?

They said the Kali Yuga comprises 4 lakh years because the Puranas said it. Anybody can give any explanation in this fashion. Puranas say that 'some fellow over there performed penance for a thousand years and some fellow over here ruled for 10 thousand years'. Do we dance with joy when we hear such things? This stupid calculation too is of the same kind.

Ambedkar considered 'Kali Yuga' as though it were a 'scientific truth'. Hence he indulged in arguments about it. If Brahmins' calculation of the period is a 'myth', isn't 'Kali Yuga' itself a 'myth'? Isn't a myth if Vishnupurana says that Kali Yuga lasts for 1200 years? Will any astronomer, if he really has a brain, accept the concept of Kali Yuga? Will he make calculations for it? If the Brahmins accept astronomical calculations, will it become real?

If people claim that a human year is equal to one divine day, would we argue with them thus, 'No, it is not the way to calculate Kali Yuga; it should be like this'? Would we argue by referring to Puranas and mantras? Ambedkar's argument went on and on and on, eventually concluded thus:

> "What was the object of the Vedic Brahmins in thus indefinitely extending the period of the Kali Yuga? Was it to blackmail some Shudra Kings that the theory of Kali Yuga was invented and made unending so as to destroy his subjects from having any faith in his rule?" (Vol.4, p. 306).

Ambedkar accuses the Brahmins of extending the Kali Yuga with a malicious intention to harm Shudras! This 'Kali Yuga' is a funny thing: its term increases if Brahmins increase it and it decreases if they reduce it! What is the benefit for the people if Kali Yuga ended a long time ago? What is the loss if it still continues? Will the stupidity grow or knowledge grows by such crazy discussion?

2) The riddle of 'Goddesses'

There are some stories in the religious literature to the effect that Goddesses like Durga and Kali fought wars against Asuras, even while there were male Gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva who did not. Ambedkar criticises severely the writers of such stories. For, according to Ambedkar, fabricating stories of Goddesses fighting wars even when there were male Gods to do the work amounts to depicting male Gods as 'cowards'!

> "...while in the Vedic times the wars with the Asuras are left to be fought by the Gods, in the Puranic times they are left to be fought by the Goddesses. Why is that Puranic Goddesses had to do what the Gods in Vedic times did?... This is a riddle which requires explanation" (Vol.4, pp: 105-6).

How did Ambedkar explain this riddle? He said,

> "...the Brahmins do not seem to have realized that by making Durga the heroine who alone was capable of destroying the Asuras, they were making their own Gods a set of miserable cowards" (Vol.4, pp:106-7).

Narrating the story of a Goddess named Mahamaya who killed a king of giants, Ambedkar comments as follows:

> "How can such cowardly Gods have any prowess? If they had none, how can they give it to their wives?... Was it to put in a new commodity on the market that the Brahmins started the worship of the Goddesses and degraded the Gods?" (Vol. 4, p. 107).

When there are male-female differences among human beings, men may participate in some actions and women may participate in some actions. Such things do happen, don't they?

Of course, we have to search for an answer to the question as to how Goddesses attained special status subsequently, which they did not have during Vedic times. If we find the reason, we have to explain it. Otherwise, we have to raise a question and leave it like that. But, what did Ambedkar say? He did not say anything except that he criticised the Brahmins for making the male Gods a set of miserable cowards and defaming them.

If Goddesses perform some courageous deed, must it mean that the male Gods are miserable cowards? Does it amount to defaming them? This means that, according to Ambedkar, only men have to do courageous deeds always! Only men can do them! Well then does it not mean that women are miserable cowards? Perhaps, it is his opinion that women are miserable cowards anyway!

If we consider such stories and Ambedkar's criticism, the Brahmins who wrote these stories are nobler than Ambedkar. Claiming that he explained the riddle, Ambedkar did nothing except insulting women.

3) Is the poet of 'Mahabharata' truthful or 'vainglorious'?

On many occasions, as we have already seen, an important defect appears in Ambedkar's arguments relating to both religious matters and social matters. Often, they lack coherence between any two contexts. It is very surprising to note this even in very important contexts. Look at the case of Paijavana.

King Paijavana was a Shudra. We find this information in the Shanti Parva of Mahabharata. We find the name of Paijavana in Rig-Veda too but there we find no information that he was a Shudra. Ambedkar argues that we need not doubt what Mahabharata says just because Rig-Veda does not corroborate it, for the author of Mahabharata can hardly give false information. Ambedkar's argument on this question proceeds as follows:

> "The author of the Mahabharata has no reason to give a false description. Writing after such a long time, no motive, no partiality could be attributed to him... The fact that Paijavana is not described as a Shudra in the Rig Veda does not militate against the truth of the statement which occurs in the Mahabharata" (Vol. 7, P. 205).

This passage occurs in the essay *Who were Shudras?* In the same essay, Ambedkar expressed gratitude to the author of Mahabharata. He said:

> "Whether it is Vyasa, Vaishampayana, Suta, Lomaharshana or Bhrigu... whoever he was, he has rendered great service by giving a full description of Paijavana... I express my gratitude to the writer..." (Vol. 7, p. 18).

Thus, Ambedkar has expressed his gratitude and faith in the writer of Mahabharata in this context. But observe what sort of comment he made on the same writer at another place in the same essay!

It is the context in which he discusses the question whether reconciliation had taken place or not between Brahmins and Shudras. There are some stories of reconciliation in Mahabharata itself. But Ambedkar argues that we should not believe them since they were written in support of Brahmins.

He cited a story of reconciliation from Shanti Parva (Vol. 7, p.196). Kasyapa gave the earth to the Brahmins and went into the forest. Then Shudras and Vysyas began to act lawlessly towards the wives of the Brahmins. Then they cried out for "rule by the Kshatriyas, the guardians of justice"! Kasyapa returned and installed Kshatriyas in the kingly office. This story, thus, tells that reconciliation did occur between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. This story occurs in the same part of Mahabharata in which there is a mention of Paijavan. Besides this story, Ambedkar cited some more stories relating to the reconciliation. Citing all those stories, he says:

> "Such is the evidence. Can anybody accept it as reliable? In my opinion, far from accepting it, one should beware of such evidence. In the first place, all these stories of reconciliation end, for the Kshatriyas, in peace without honour. In every case, the Kshatriyas are shown to have undergone an abject surrender....The stories are all doctored with a view to glorify the Brahmins and humiliate the Kshatriyas. Who can take such dirty, filthy, abominable and vainglorious stories of reconciliation as true historical facts? Only a supporter of Brahminism can do so" (Vol. 7, p.197).

Is it Ambedkar who said this about the writer of Mahabharata? How strange is this? He is the same person who argued at another place in the same essay thus:

> "The author of the Mahabharata has no reason to give a false description. Writing after such a long time, no motive, no partiality could be attributed to him....The fact that Paijavana is not described as a Shudra in the Rig Veda does not militate against the truth of the statement which occurs in the Mahabharata" (Vol. 7, p. 205).

He is the same person who expressed his gratitude to the author! What does it mean if the same person says about the same author thus, "Who can take such dirty, filthy, abominable and vainglorious stories of reconciliation as true historical facts?" Why should Ambedkar have an objection to accepting the stories which tell that reconciliation took place between Brahmins and Kshatriyas? How does this argument stand alongside Ambedkar's newly founded theory that Brahmins stopped officiating Upanayanas in order to take revenge against Kshatriyas? He really ought to give up that theory. It is because of this reason that he objected.

But, he can as well realize that his proposed theory is wrong and hence can give it up by adhering to his statement that the author tells truth only. The same author becomes a man of truth when he writes something that pleases Ambedkar: namely, that Paijavana is a Shudra king. The author is a 'vainglorious' 'supporter of Brahminism' when he writes something that displeases Ambedkar: namely that reconciliation took place between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. This is not merely a question of coherence between arguments. Clearly, it questions the honesty of these arguments.

It appears that the main principle that Ambedkar followed in any discussion is to argue in a manner that suits him. That is why we don't find coherence between any two contexts. The reason for such a situation is that Ambedkar believes that the theories which he discovered are correct and goes on committing so many blunders just because he is excessively zealous to defend his theories at any cost however haphazard they are.

Another aspect of this discussion: "The author of the Mahabharata has no reason to give a false description. Writing after such a long time, no motive, no partiality could be attributed to him", says Ambedkar, doesn't he? Can we agree with this argument?

How does an author know an incident about which he writes after a long lapse of time? What the people of previous generations say on the subject may be his hearsay evidence. But, as time passes, individuals who really knew the incident and remnants concerning the incident disappear. Many additions and distortions will modify what originally happened. The original facts fade in transmission of the facts from one generation to another. In such a situation speculation must predominate. Thus, indeed, there may be little truth in what is written after a long lapse of time.

We need to understand this problem in a different manner as well. If a given incident relates to a conflict then there would be two opposite sides. Justice may reside on one side and injustice on the other. Even if it is an incident in which we find injustice on both the sides, there are bound to be crucial differences. While the people who take the side of 'justice' try to defend justice, those who oppose it try to demolish its basis.

People—whether they belong to the past or present—interpret an incident according to their 'interests'. They propagate their justifications accordingly. Therefore, it is not possible to argue that an author gives false description if he writes it simultaneously and tells truth invariably if he writes after a long gap of time following the conflict in question.

Whether one gives a false description or truth depends on the side to which the writer belongs concerning a given incident.

4) Some critical comments on religious literature

In some contexts Ambedkar unhesitatingly criticized Hindu religious literature. For example, traditionalists say that it was God who created the Vedas and sent them down to the earth from the heavens, hence they are superhuman. To this kind of argument, Ambedkar gave the name 'mischievous dogma' (Vol. 4, p. 8). He says:

> "Nobody has had the courage to ask why [we need]these worthless books which contain nothing but invocation to tribal Gods to destroy the Enemies, loot their property..." (Vol. 4, p. 9).

Nor did Ambedkar hesitate to call Shankaracharya a lunatic, because he taught that there is Brahma and this Brahma is real and it pervades all, while at the same time he upheld all the inequities which the caste system had created. Ambedkar unhesitatingly commented thus:

> "only a lunatic could be happy with being the propounder of two such contradictions" (Vol. 4, p. 287).

But Ambedkar's comments on certain social issues are hardly appropriate. For example:

> "Niyoga which is the Aryan name for a system under which a woman who is wedded can beget on herself a progeny from another who is not her husband... The Niyoga were [was just]another name for illicit intercourse between men and women which might last for one night or twelve years or more with the husband a willing and a sleeping partner in this trade of fornication" (Vol. 4, p. 299).

If we understand this situation in terms of 'illicit intercourse' and 'trade of fornication', will these meanings apply to those contexts? Presumably it was legitimate at that time. It was a period when a higher form of man-woman relationship involving 'one woman and one man' (Monogamy) had not yet begun. We should neither condemn it nor glorify it as a holy affair. We have to criticise the stupid conception that 'everything that religious texts contain is pious'.

Certain stories in the religious texts are amusing. Here and there they contain some facts. There is a story, for instance, that tells how Parvathi got the name 'Gowri'. Parvathi and Shiva were wife and husband. They used to quarrel with each other during their sojourn on the Kailash Mountain. (Incidentally, this means wife and husband quarrel even when they are in 'Kailas' or 'heaven'!). Shiva used to complain that Parvati looks dark. (Didn't he notice this before their marriage?). Once Parvati got angry and left Shiva for a few days (only a few days?) and performed a rigorous penance. Brahma appeared to Parvati and gave her a golden complexion. Thus Parvati became 'Gowri' (=a woman with fair complexion). Then she returned to her husband (Vol. 4, p. 101). Well, it would have been better had she performed that penance before marriage, got golden complexion and then marry, isn't it? The whole thing was, apparently, in her hands! Perhaps Shiva used to get angry, or to use a Telugu idiom his 'body must be burning' because Parvati was too lazy to do penance instead of going about with a dark complexion! Isn't it natural for Shiva to scold Parvati?

Nowhere do we find the reason for so much attraction for 'fair complexion' even in the religious stories. Quarrels between wives and husbands relating to 'complexion', beauty and property are common in society. They seem to have, however, entered religious stories as well.

In volume 4, we find many riddles and discussions concerning the Hindu religion. They are also amusing to read.

4 HINDUS AND UNTOUCHABLES

Untouchability has been an evil practice of Hindu religion in India. The entire population belonging to the upper castes and Shudra castes treat the population of the lowest castes as 'untouchables'. They believe that they are polluted ('ceremonial defilement') by contact with them and that they will be freed from that pollution only when they take bath. That is why they do not allow untouchables to enter their houses and stand at a distance even while talking to them.

Many kinds of superstitious notions relating to pollution prevail in Hindu society. For example, the belief that people are polluted if they touch a menstruating woman or one in parturition. Similarly there is a belief that when a person dies, all those with the same surname are polluted and even others who touch these persons will also be polluted. There are many more such superstitions! But the effect of all these forms of pollution lasts only

for a few days. Untouchability, on the other hand, is not a temporary form of pollution at all. That whole population in question remain untouchables throughout life. There won't be any change in this kind of pollution, namely, Untouchability.

This evil practice is not confined to any one particular region in the country. Until recently, it was quite widespread. It was more widespread in villages than in towns. Though the situation has changed to a considerable extent, Untouchability is still a reality in villages even today. Nobody knows when and why this evil practice started. Historians offer different reasons. None of the reasons appears correct or satisfactory.

Ambedkar too tried to identify the cause of this problem based on the evidence from Hindu religious texts and history. He discussed many aspects of Untouchability in *Who were the Shudras?* (Vol. 7) and some other essays. The entire fifth volume concerns Untouchability. The entire information given here is from that volume only.

Ambedkar himself was born and brought up in the untouchable Mahar caste of Maharashtra. He could not escape from the hardships and humiliation connected with Untouchability even after studying in foreign countries and receiving many degrees. The struggle against this evil practice became an important part of his personal life.

Although there were persons who fought against Untouchability prior to Ambedkar, the specialty of Ambedkar is that he also fought for the political rights of the untouchables, as we shall see later.

The first thing that Ambedkar says about Untouchability is that this kind of evil practice is unique to India. In other societies too, we find social inequalities, classification of people into superior vs. inferior people and free vs. unfree individuals: Slaves in Rome, Jews in Germany, Negroes in America, Viviens in Britain, and so on. Hierarchical differences of some sort have existed at every place in the past. Yet in no country do we find exact parallel caste system or Untouchability as we find in India.

Population figures were collected across India for the first time in 1881. Since then, census figures have been collected once in ten years. In 1891, an attempt was made to collect caste-wise figures. In 1930, it was declared that the population of untouchables was approximately four and half crores (44.6 millions). According to the 1951 census, the population of untouchables was 5 crores 13 lakhs. So many crores of people subjected to Untouchability!

It is a common practice that both natives as well as foreigners glorify or romanticize Indian villages thus: There is great purity of mind and innocence, beauty, unity and so on! As if there exists a great system of

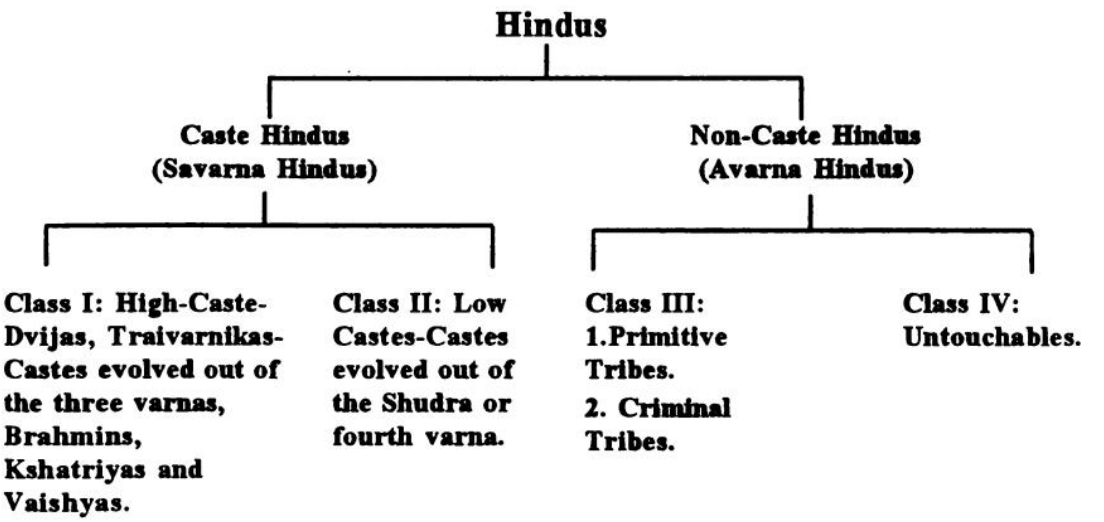
equality! In fact, the entire population there is actually split into castes. While people of the upper castes and Shudra castes live in the village, the untouchable castes live outside the village at its boarder. This is the case with most Indian villages.

If we have to divide the entire population of Hindus according to the system described in the Hindu religious texts, we may divide them into 4 classes (4 layers). This is not a division of Four varnas. The population of four varnas also comes under this division. The entire population belonging to the four varnas constitutes the 'caste Hindus' ('Savarna Hindus'). Those who do not have relationship with caste Hindus, are 'Non-caste Hindus' ('Avarna-Hindus'). These Non-caste Hindus have such other names also as Antya, Antyaja, Antyavasin and Bahya (Vol. 7, p. 359).

Showing the entire Hindu population in the form of a table, Ambedkar said:

> "Perhaps a diagrammatic presentation may be helpful. I give below one which, in my judgement, facilitates the understanding of the social structure of the Hindus" (Vol. 5, p. 112).

Ambedkar's Diagram:


Hindus
Caste Hindus (Savarna Hindus)
Non-Caste Hindus (Avarna Hindus)
Class I: High-Caste-Dvijas, Traivarnikas-Castes evolved out of the three varnas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.
Class II: Low Castes-Castes evolved out of the Shudra or fourth varna.
Class III: 1.Primitive Tribes. 2. Criminal Tribes.
Class IV: Untouchables.

Ambedkar explains his schematic representation as follows:

> "The diagram shows that although there are innumerable castes among the Hindus, they can all be grouped under four classes. Of these four, Class I forms the *Herenfolk* or the Ruling Class, Classes III and IV form the subject people... Those in Class I form the privileged classes of the Hindu society. The Hindu social order was created by them. They alone benefit by it while the aim of these in Class I is to save it" (Vol. 5, p. 112-3).

Here we have to recall the term 'Brahminical literature' which we mentioned earlier. Now, we may take evidence from Ambedkar's words in order to grasp as to why the term 'upper caste literature' is more appropriate rather than 'Brahminical literature'. What is Ambedkar arguing here? In Hindu society, not only Brahmins but all the 3 upper castes have privileges. They themselves created the 'caste system'. It is not simply one class that benefitted from the caste system: all the 3 classes have benefited. They are the rulers. If we assume things like this, it will not be correct to consider every issue as the creation of Brahmins alone. It would be proper to view the issue in terms of how all the upper castes obtained privileges. Ambedkar's argument itself supports this point. As classified in the table, it is proper to show the first three Varnas—Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vysyas—as one class and the remaining population as different classes.

When we looked at the four varnas, we thought that Shudras are the only occupants of the lowest stratum of society. But this classification shows us that in fact there are people who are at an even lower social level than Shudras. Let us first briefly consider 'primitive' and 'criminal' tribes and then return to the 'untouchables' (see Ambedkar, Vol.5, ch.15).

Primitive tribes:

"They live in small scattered huts in forests. They live on wild fruits, nuts and roots. Fishing and hunting are also resorted to for the purpose of securing food. Agriculture plays a very small part in their social economy. Food supplies being extremely precarious they lead a life of semi-starvation from which there is no escape. As to clothes they economize them to a vanishing point. They move almost in a state of complete nakedness... They have very little indeed in the way of material effects...a few cooking pots and a basket or two... They put cock's plumes and peacock's feathers in their turbans. Many girls are profusely tattooed, especially on their faces, and some of them on their legs as well... Witchcraft, sorcery, animal and human sacrifice make up their religion. Without education, with no idea of science or of the knowledge of the working of nature, steeped in ignorance and superstition, these Primitive tribes have been living on the outskirts and in close conformity with civilization in a savage stage which has been their lot for ages" (Vol. 5, p.130).

These primitive tribes did not face the condition of 'Untouchability'.

The criminal tribes:

"The Criminal Classes at one time included such well organized confederacies of Professional Criminals as the Pindharies and the Thugs.—The Pindharies were a predatory body of armed gangsters. Their

organization was an open military organization of freebooters who could muster 20,000 fine horses and even more. They were under the command of brigand chiefs. Chintu, one of the most powerful commanders had under his single command 10,000 horses, including 5,000 good cavalry, besides infantry and guns....They were subject of none. They rendered loyalty to none. They respected none and plundered all high and low, rich and poor without fear or compunction....The Thugs were a well organized body of professional assassins, who in gangs of from 10 to 200 traveled in various guises throughout India, worked themselves into the confidence of wayfarers of the wealthier class and, when a favourable opportunity occurred, strangled them by throwing a handkerchief or noose round their necks and then plundered and buried them....Assassination for gain was with them a religious duty, and was considered a holy and honourable profession....It was not until the British became rulers of the country that any attempt was made to suppress the Thugs. By 1835, 382 Thugs were hanged and 986 were transported or imprisoned for life. Even as late as 1879 the number of registered Thugs was 344..." (Vol. 5, p.131-2).

The Untouchables:

These criminal tribes did not count as untouchables. These murders too treat untouchables as inferior to them.

Let us consider the untouchables themselves. These people are not primitive tribes who live in forests, nor criminals making a living out of crime. They are labourers who live entirely on their own labour. They do not generally possess either lands or other resources. When they do, it is very little. It is negligible. Their only means of survival is labour on the lands of the upper castes in return for whatever the upper castes are pleased to give.

Civilization is a gradually accumulated store of knowledge concerning nature, crafts and arts. Indians boast that their society had reached a very high degree of civilization in the ancient times itself when people of other societies in the world were leading a primitive life and moving naked.

The Hindu civilization kept some part of their population in the jungle like animals; turned some into bandits and murderers, and it gifted Untouchability to the labouring people.

Words like 'Chaturvarna' (four varnas), Savarnas (Caste varnas) and Avarnas (Non-caste varnas) to an extent represent archaic usage. It is not the language used in the present day society. The modern forms of the archaic classification are classes 'Hindus-Untouchables'. In Ambedkar's words:

"Those whom Manu included within the Chaturvarna correspond to the modern composite class called Hindus. Those whom Manu called Bahayas (outside the Chaturvarna) correspond to the present day untouchables of India. The dividing line between the four classes—Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra—included within Chaturvarna have in modern times become some what blurred and there has been some degree of amalgamation between them. But the line which Manu drew between those within the Chaturvarna from those outside the Chaturvarna is still clear and is not allowed to be effaced or crossed" (Vol. 5, p. 279).

This means that in this sense the Shudras became one with the first 3 varnas because they did not have to experience Untouchability. It also means that there is a wide gulf between the untouchables and others who do not experience Untouchability.

What do religious texts—which tell that Shudras emerged from the feet of Brahma—say about 'untouchables'? They don't tell anything with that label ('Untouchable'). But, they call the children born of inter-varna relations 'Avarnas' (Non-caste Hindus). Untouchables come under 'Avarnas'. This is what the religious texts say.

All those who worship Hindu gods and observe the Hindu religion in a general sense count as Hindus. If we see from this angel, untouchables too are Hindus. But Ambedkar calls non-untouchables 'Hindus' because Hindus do not consider untouchables as belonging to their religion. Hence it is Ambedkar's opinion that untouchables should not consider themselves Hindus. According to him, the primary division in Hindu society is between Hindus and untouchables. There is nothing to differ with this opinion if we see from the angle of Untouchability!

However, when we see Hindu society in terms of 'Savarnas and Avarnas' or 'Hindus and Untouchables', the necessary link between the Shudras and untouchables does not seem to appear anywhere. Both the sections are labourers. Moreover, they are confined to manual labour. We are not concerned with the stupid explanations of the religious texts with reference to these sections. Some relationship must appear between Shudras and untouchables in our explanations. It would be rational to think if we understand that these two sections consist of labourers only.

1) This is how Hindus practice 'Untouchability'!

Now let us note some factual incidents that show how Hindus practice untouchability.

According to Ambedkar, the following is the state of affairs during the rule of Peshwas of Maharashtra in 18th century:

> "Under the rule of Marathas and the Peshwas the Untouchables were not allowed within the gates of Poona City, the capital of the Peshwas between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. because, before nine and after three, their bodies cast too long a shadow; and whenever their shadow fell upon a Brahmin it polluted him, so that he dare not taste food or water until he had bathed and washed the impurity away. So also no untouchable was allowed to live in a walled town; cattle and dogs could freely enter but not the untouchables" (Vol. 12, p. 720).
>
> "Under the rule of the Marathas and the Peshwas the untouchables might not spit on the ground lest a Hindu should be polluted by touching it with his foot, but had to hang an earthen pot round his neck to hold his spittle. He was made to drag a thorny branch of a tree with him to brush out of his footsteps and when Brahman came by, had to lie at a distance on his face lest his shadow might fall on the Brahman" (Vol. 12, p. 720; Vol. 1, p. 39).

The following is a case that proceeded in the Madras court in 1901. Hindus wanted to conduct a procession from a temple but they did not conduct it because there were Pariahs (untouchables) standing in the street. They, later, filed a case against those Pariahs. The lower court sentenced the Pariahs but the high court set aside the conviction and sentence. Setting aside of the sentence is a different matter. But it indicates that Pariahs did not even have the right to stand in the street! (Vol. 5, p. 27-28).

A letter that appeared in the 'Times of India' in November 1928, described the plight of untouchables as follows: Once a teacher named Chunnibhai poured water into the bucket of a Bhangi woman directly. Then the Hindus there warned the teacher thus: 'Master! We don't allow such things here!' There is a bamboo pipe fitted to a small cistern below the slope of the well. The untouchables have to keep their pots below that pipe. Hindus, who take water from the well, will pour some water into that tub if there is any left in the bucket after they have filled their pot. That water goes via the bamboo pipe into the pot of Untouchables. They cannot get even that water if no water is left in the bucket. More water may go into the cistern only when another Hindu comes to the well and has some left in his bucket. None can say as to how many hours it would take in that manner to fill a pot kept under that bamboo pipe. We cannot say when will the pot of the next untouchable be filled! (Vol. 5, p. 39).

There is **no date** for this news item: "Chand Singh, an untouchable of village Katu, was made to go round the village on the back of a donkey with face blackened for the fault of having drunk water at the well of a high caste Zamindar" (Vol. 5, p. 61).

A news report in *Tej*, dated **April 11, 1924**: Swami Shraddhananda went to a nationalist school in Khatsayas. There were only three untouchable students. They were sitting in the verandah at a distance. Swami Shraddhananda requested the teachers to allow the untouchable students to sit inside the class room along with the other students. The teachers, on the advice of Swami Shraddhananda, called the untouchable students and allowed them to sit inside. But all the remaining students began to abstain to school from the next day. The school stands locked from that day! (Vol. 5, p. 40).

A news report in *Milap,* dated **April 18, 1924**: This is an incident that occurred at Hoshangabad. The district council sent a circular to all the schools asking them to allow untouchable boys and girls into the schools. The headmasters of the schools started to implement the circular. In one village the magistrate stopped sending his children to the school and the parents of other children too did the same. Then the school committee met and resolved that it 'cannot take the responsibility of admitting the untouchable children into the school since all the people are opposing the admission of untouchable children'. Thereafter the previous situation continued (Vol. 7, p.52).

An untouchable, when he files a case, does not enter the court hall. He would stay in the premises outside the court hall. If he enters the court hall, he would face many problems with Hindus after he goes back to the village. His advocate alone will be in the court hall. There are no details whether they call the untouchable person while recording his deposition (Vol. 2, pp. 479-80).

There are places where both Hindus and Untouchables fetch water from the same pond. But from different entry points! (Vol. 2, p. 481).

A report in *'Milap'* on **2-10-1925:** In a village called 'Ruduurprayaga', in an evening, an untouchable came running to the gate of a 'dharmashala' (a monastery) and cried that a tiger was chasing him and requested the pastor to permit him to come inside. But the high caste

pastor of the dharmashala did not open the gate, as he is an untouchable. In the meantime, the tiger came behind and pounced upon him and he lost consciousness (Vol. 5, p. 96).

A letter published in *'Pratap'*, dated **June 23, 1926**: On March 5, a Chamar-caste person conducted the marriage of his daughter. As the economic position of his family was little better, he entertained his guests in a better manner. Moreover, he gave three gold ornaments to his daughter. This infuriated the upper caste Jats. All the Jats assembled, discussed and resolved that Chamars were trying to be equal to them and hence their arrogance should be suppressed. On March 20, the upper caste people went in mobs and attacked Chamars. They looted their houses, destroyed their crops and boycotted them in general (Vol. 5, p. 50).

A report in 'Times of India' dated **January 4, 1928**: Rajputs and Brahmins in the villages of Indore district laid down some restrictions on an untouchable-community called 'Balais' and issued written instructions. The restrictions were as follows: Balais should not wear clothes that have colour borders, lace borders and borders with fancy colours. Balai women too should not wear fancy garments. If any Hindu dies, Balais should go the houses of their (Hindu) relatives—however distant they may be—and inform the death news. Balais should play drums in the marriages at the houses of Hindus. Balai women should compulsorily serve the Hindu women during the delivery time. Whenever Balais do any thing for Hindus, they should not do so without expecting any remuneration. They have to accept whatever Hindus give them. All those Balais who do not accept these restrictions should leave the village. This is the declaration of the Hindus!

Hindus compelled Balais to sign the stamped papers agreeing to these restrictions. But Balais refused to sign and complained to the Darbar of Indore. But they did not receive any help from Darbar. Hindus began to oppress Balais in various ways: not allowing Balais to walk along their fields; not allowing Balais to graze cattle in their vacant fields, driving their cattle into the fields of Balais; beating Balais on one pretext or the other and so on. Unable to bear these sufferings, Balais left their houses and migrated to distant villages along with their kith and kin (Vol. 5, p. 48-9).

A report in *'Pratap'* dated **February 1928**: At a place called Chandayal, in the state of Jodhpur, one untouchable family of Sargaroes caste prepared 'halva' in connection with a marriage in their house. By

the time, the guests were about to sit for the feast, Kanwar Sahib of Chandawala sent orders to the untouchable household. He declared that untouchables do not have the right to eat tasty foods like halva and hence they have to stop eating it. Some sycophants negotiated with the untouchable family that they would get permission if they pay Rs. 1,000 to Sahib. Sargaroes got angry, refused to pay and went ahead with the feast (Vol. 5, p. 52). But we can imagine how much did they suffer after this incident.

Attacks on untouchables are invariable if they use palanquin, the band music or go on a procession over a horse during the marriage ceremony. Only upper castes are entitled for such fancies. In **June 1938,** Thakurs of Sevra village attacked the marriage party of Jatavs and mercilessly beaten them with spears and lathis. The reason was that the bridegroom of the untouchable family wore a glittering crown! (Vol. 5, p. 53).

It is also a crime if untouchables utter the words, which upper caste people use. In November 1936, an untouchable belonging to Ezava caste in a village of Malabar area went to a shop and asked for 'uppu' (salt). The untouchables should use the word 'pulichatan' and they are not expected to utter the word 'uppu' as the upper caste people do. The shopkeeper became very wild and beat the untouchable so severely that the untouchable died (Vol. 5, p. 54-5).

A report in *'Young India'*, in **December 1929**: An untouchable woman fell sick severely at the time of delivery. Her husband went to a doctor and requested him to come to his house to see his wife. The doctor refused to go and asked the husband of the patient to get her to another place. The husband took his wife who had just delivered and the newly born child to another place. Doctor came there but does not touch the patient. If he gives the thermometer to the hand of a Muslim, the Muslim gives it to the patient's husband and the husband in turn gives it to the wife. The thermometer comes back to the doctor in the same manner. The doctor looked at the meter from a distance, declared that the patient was suffering from pneumonia, collected the fee and left. That is the whole treatment, which an untouchable patient received when she was seriously ill. She died on the same day (Vol. 5, p. 29).

In Navinipatti about two miles from a place called Melur of Madurai district, the village munsif took objection to two untouchable youth for

wearing decent dress on Pongal festival and made them remove their garments and do full prostration on the ground and go away in loin-cloth only (Vol. 5, p. 119).

An incident that occurred in Madras presidency in **December 1930**. The upper caste Kallars declared some prohibitions against the untouchable 'Adi Dravida' community as follows: The Adi-Dravidas shall not wear ornaments of gold or silver. Their males should not wear coats or shirts or baniyans. They should not wear their clothes below their knees or above the hips. They should not have their hair cropped. Their women should not cover the upper portion of their bodies by clothes. That they should not use flowers or saffron paste. They should not use other than earthenware vessels in their homes. They should not use umbrellas for protection against sun and rain nor should they wear sandals. But untouchables did not care to observe. Hence Tallars passed some more orders in June 1931 as follows: The Adi-Dravidas and Devendrakula vellalars should not wear clothes below their knees. The untouchable women should carry water only in earthen pots and not in copper or brass vessels. They should use straw only to carry the water pots and no clothes should be used for that purpose. Their children should not read and get themselves literate or educated. They have to tend the cattle of the Mirasdars. Untouchables should not lease the land from the Mirasdars. They should work in the lands of Mirasdars. Men should take four annas and women should take two annas only as wages. If untouchables want to sell their land they have to sell it at very cheap rate and if they don't do so, no water will be allowed to them to irrigate their lands. Even if they raise the crops with rainwater, Mirasidars will confiscate those crops when they are ripe for harvest (Vol. 5, pp.279-80).

1932 December: The government of Baroda had issued orders permitting children of untouchables in the schools. Since then the hardships of untouchables increased. Many incidents took place: burning of the houses and stacks of hay belonging to untouchables; sprinkling of kerosene oil in their wells; beating of untouchables children going to schools and boycotting the untouchables and so on (Vol. 5, p. 41).

A report in *'Bombay Samachar'* on **December 19, 1936**: A child fell into a well in Kaladi village of Calicut. None present dared to go down the well. A neighboring villager who was passing by jumped into the well and saved the child. When all those present there asked him about his caste, he said the truth. His was an untouchable caste. Then the people there, instead of thanking him for saving the child, assaulted him for polluting the well (Vol. 5, p. 30).

In Uttar Pradesh, the corn given to the untouchables as their wages is called 'Gobaraha'. 'Gobaraha' means privy corn or corn contained in the dung of an animal. When the crop is fully grown, reaped and dried, it is spread on the threshing floor. Bullocks are made to tread over the corn in order to take the corn out of husk by the pressure of their hooves. While treading over the corn, the bullocks swallow up the corn as well as the straw. As their intake is excessive they find it difficult to digest the corn. Next day, the same corn comes out of their stomach along with their dung. The untouchables have to wash the dung, separate the corn and receive the corn as their wages. The masters give those 'dung corn' too as per the calculation but do not give even a little more than the calculation. (There are no details as to when they used to pay wages like this). There won't be any greater example than this to depict the plight of untouchables (Vol. 5, p.23-24).

On March 6, 1938, a meeting of Bhangi caste people was held in Dadar area of Bombay. A Bhangi youth narrated his job experiences as follows. (Here I am giving a brief summary of the incident depicted in Vol. 5, pp. 30-33). I had passed school final in 1933. I studied English upto fourth standard. I applied for the post of a teacher but I did not get it. I got the job of a 'Talati' (village patwari). I went to join an office in Borsad taluka of Kheda district. Until then, I was not aware that people observe untouchability even in the government offices. I thought there won't be any problem for me since I mentioned my caste in the application. As soon as I went to the office, the clerk asked me about my caste and I told him what my caste is. He immediately began to abuse me: 'First get out of here. Stand at a distance! How dare you come close to me? You are in office, if you were outside I would have given you six kicks, what audacity to come here for the job!' Later he asked me to drop my papers on the ground and then he picked them up. I used to face lot of difficulty for water during my stay in that office. A peon used to give water to all the staff members in the office from the pot. Whenever he is absent, all people used to go to the pot and take water. But it was not permissible to me. There used to be a small earthen pot separately for me. The peon used to dislike to pour water into my pot. He used to slip away somewhere as if he was not aware when I go for water. I did not get drinking water for many days. Same thing happened in the case of residence. There nobody did rent a house to me. For some days, I used to sleep in the office verandah. I used to walk 11 kilometers daily to and fro. Later, I got a house in a village. After sometime, our Mamlatdar sent me to another place for training. There, they never allowed me to enter into the office. They did not teach me anything. The headman of the village was too much opposed to me. He used to say daily, "Do you sit in the

office chair as our equal while your father and your brothers live as sweepers. It is better if you leave this job at the earliest possible. Beware!' One day, I went to the office of the Talati in Saijpur in connection with the office work. The headman of the village and Talati were there in the office. I stood outside the entrance and saluted them. They pretended as if they had not noticed me. I stood like that for quite some time. Finally, I could not tolerate, went inside and sat in a chair. Immediately, both of them went out. After some time, people began to come into the office in large numbers. A big crowd surrounded me. I subsequently learnt that the chair on which I sat was that of the librarian. He began to shout, "Who allowed this dirty dog of Bhangi to sit on my chair?" I got up from the chair and sat on the floor. The crowd around me began to abuse me that they would kill me and cut me into pieces. I begged their pardon for sitting on the chair. They were not listening to me. I got the doubt that they would really kill me. I asked the peon there to give me a piece of paper and wrote a letter to the Mamaltdar of Borsad. "If they kill me here, you have to hand over my dead body to my parents", I wrote. I hoped that the crowd around me would hesitate after seeing my letter. Seeing that letter the librarian ordered me to tear it. I followed his order. The crowd was still abusing me: "Do you do the job of Talati? Do you come to the office and sit on the chair?" I told them that I would give up the job. The mob did not allow me to leave the place till the evening. The headman of the village and the Talati, who left the office before, did not come back to the office till then. Thereafter, I went to my village on leave (Vol. 5, pp. 30-33).

A reporter from Jaipur reported on **June 25, 1953** as follows: The guinea worm disease is prevalent in the villages of Jaipur. It is a dreadful disease. It spreads only when water is not clean. 127 people of 57 untouchable families in Kopra village near Banwara are suffering from this disease. In a family of six, five people have this disease. The collector was shocked to know that the pond from which untouchables fetch water was full of guinea worms. He passed orders to close the pond immediately. There is a drinking well nearby which Savarnas (Caste-Hindus) use. The collector asked Savarnas to allow untouchables to take water from that well. They did not agree. The collector asked them: "will you drink the water containing guinea worms?". Yet they did not agree. The collector could not do anything (Vol. 5, p. 117).

Hindus oppress untouchables in various ways if they try to assert their rights. The oppression takes many forms: Burning of their huts, destroying trees etc., in the backyards, impounding their cattle, fabricating

false cases, not calling them for wage labour, taking back the lands from them, creating false documents and confiscating the small properties of the untouchables, attaching their properties for the landlord's arrears of revenue. Needless to mention the assaults and murders (Vol. 1, p. 407).

In Hindu society, there are more unfortunate people than untouchables. Just as there are 'untouchable' castes, there are also 'unapproachable' and 'unseeable' castes. Nayadis are the people who come under the category of unseeable. Begging is their occupation. These people receive alms only when the person who offers lays down something on the ground and only after he proceeds to a sufficient distance.

There are 'unseeable' castes in Tinnevalley district of Madras presidency. Begging in the darkness is their occupation. It is not possible to imagine how all these people live (Vol. 5, p. 139).

There is no distinction whatsoever in the case of practicing untouchability between one place and another: wells and ponds of drinking water, schools, hospitals, dharmashalas, roads, buses, trains, courts, police stations, banks, government offices, this place and that place. There is no place where there is any practice of untouchability. While the untouchables do not possess some rights, the upper caste people do not allow untouchables to make use of the available rights. If the untouchables complain to the police, the police too accuse untouchables. They do not accept complaints. They write in favour of upper castes. Such cases do not stand in the courts. Though other categories of poor people experience all these sufferings, the untouchables have an additional burden called 'untouchability'.

What is the total number of untouchable castes in India? The government of India declared this list (schedule) in 1935. At that time there were only 9 states in India: Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces (UP), Panjab, Bihar, Central Provinces (MP), Assam and Orissa. There have been untouchable castes in all these states: at one place with the tribe name and at another place with the race name. If we combine the sub-castes and sub-races within untouchables, the total number of untouchable castes is 429. Their population is 5 to 6 crores! So many human beings constitute 'untouchables'!

According to the government, these castes are 'scheduled castes' (Vol. 7, p. 259).

Of these,

Scheduled castes = **SCs.**

Scheduled tribes = **STs.**

We find numerous descriptions of brutality and oppression of untouchables by Hindus in the whole of volume 5. The care and love, which Ambedkar showed for untouchables in giving this information, create in us lot of respect for him.

5 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, 'HOW' DID UNTOUCHABILITY BEGIN?

How and when did Untouchability begin? To this question, there are two or three kinds of responses: that the origins of Untouchability lie in racial differences; that it arose from performance of unclean work, and so on. Ambedkar does not accept any of these explanations. Regarding the first explanation, he says that there is no racial difference between Hindus and Untouchables. He argues that Untouchability is not something that resulted due to racial differences because racial differences are determined in terms of the shape of the heads and structure of the bones and it has been proved that such differences are not found in the Indian population. He discussed many aspects of this issue in his essay *Who were Untouchables?* His line of argument is as follows: Even assuming that there are racial differences between Hindus and Untouchables, Untouchability did not arise in other countries where there are racial differences.

Regarding the second argument, based on 'performance of unclean jobs', Ambedkar argues as follows: Are there not be unclean jobs in other countries as well? Are there not people in that population that performs such jobs? Yet nowhere did Untouchability exist, did it? Hence, even this cannot be the cause of Untouchability. Here, everybody has to agree with the questions which Ambedkar raised. Though nobody knows how Untouchability came into practice, the argument that it came due to racial differences or performance of unclean jobs is not convincing.

Similarly, the orthodox Hindus say that Untouchability has existed since time immemorial. Ambedkar, however, does not agree with this view either. He says that Untouchability cannot be said to have existed since time immemorial. There are no references either in the Vedas or in the Dharma Sutras. Hence, you cannot say that it has always existed. Thus,

Ambedkar rejected all the old arguments concerning Untouchability and claimed that he could propose "an altogether novel thesis". He put forward his 'novel thesis' in the essay *The Untouchables: who were they and why they became Untouchables?*

Now we must examine the 'novel thesis' and arguments which Ambedkar proposed with regard to the question: Why and when did Untouchability arise?

In India, the Untouchables in every village live outside the village at an end. Everybody is aware of this fact. Ambedkar describes the population that resides on the fringes of villages as 'Broken Men' (Many translations in Indian languages today use the term 'Dalits' as an equivalent to 'Broken Men'). Dalits did not have the problem of Untouchability. Even when there was no practice of Untouchability, they lived on the outskirts of villages for a 'different reason'. After a long time, Untouchability began due to 'another reason'. Thereafter, that marginal population continued to reside outside the village. This is how Ambedkar's explanation began:

> "That those who are called Untouchables lived outside the village from the very beginning even before they became Untouchables and that they continued to live outside the village because of the supervention of untouchablility at a later stage is the only possibility worth consideration" (Vol. 7, p.273).

Well, why did that population reside outside the village in the first place? Who were the people residing within the village boundaries at that time? To these questions, Ambedkar offers the following answer: In the transition period when primitive society was evolving into a modern society, certain tribal communities learnt cultivation of the land along with animal husbandry, gave up nomadic life and began to settle down in fixed place. But some tribal communities continued in the nomadic way of life. There used to be conflicts between settled communities and nomadic communities. Nomadic communities would attack settled communities and loot their cattle, crop and women. Fights used to take place between different nomadic tribal communities as well. Owing to these conflicts two kinds of situation arose. On the one hand, the settled communities needed 'protection' from the nomadic communities. On the other hand, people who were defeated and scattered needed 'shelter'.

Since the basis for tribal communities is blood relationship (kinship), the victorious tribe would not accept the persons of defeated tribe as its members. The scattered persons would wander as lone beings. These persons are Broken Men (Dalits). Eventually, the settled communities would engage these Broken Men for their protection, allowing them to live outside the village.

In the words of Ambedkar,

"...the Broken Men agreed to do the work of watch and ward for the Settled tribes and the Settled tribes agreed to give them food and shelter.... The Broken men were aliens. They belonged to a tribe which was different from the settled tribe. That being so, they could not be permitted to live in the midst of the Settled tribe. From the strategic point of view also it was desirable that these Broken men should live on the border of the village so as to meet the raids of the hostile tribes. ... The same processes must have taken place in India when the Hindu Society was passing from Nomadic life to the life of a settled village community" (Vol. 7, p. 276).

"The Settled Community was a wealthy community with agriculture and cattle as means of livelihood. The Broken Men were a community of paupers with no means of livelihood and entirely dependent upon the Settled Community" (Vol. 7, p. 354).

Though such Broken Men lived outside the village, there were no quarrels or misunderstandings between them and the population inside the village. There were no hurdles in the way of mutual interaction. Untouchability had not yet begun.

"[The two communities] lived apart, the former inside the village and the latter outside it, there was no bar to social intercourse between the members of the Settled Community and the Broken Men" (Vol.7, p. 270).

This is how the residence of Broken Men (Dalits) outside of the village began.

Ambedkar informs us that we may find examples of such developments as these in Ireland and Wales but the Broken Men of those countries who lived on the outskirts of the village gradually mixed with the people in the village. But this did not happen in India because Untouchability emerged instead, and it did not allow the people mingle with each other.

Untouchability began only in India. This is the point which Ambedkar elaborates.

All those who lived inside the village were Hindus. The Four Varnas had already begun a long time ago. Both Hindus, who lived inside the village, as well as Dalits, who lived outside the village, accepted the Vedic standards of conduct of life which Brahmins preached. They believed that 'God had created this world and God exists'. They performed Yagnas and Yagas (Sacrificial ceremonies) and animal sacrifice. While this was so, Buddhism began as a rejection of Hindu religious practices. Buddhism

rejects the authority of Vedas and the validity of Yagnas, Yagas and animal sacrifice. It says that belief in the existence of God is illogical or irrational. In essence, Buddhism emerged as an opponent of Hindu religion.

All the Dalits who lived on the outskirts of the villages began to subscribe to Buddhism. They stopped worshipping Brahmins. This infuriated the Hindus. Thus began a conflict between Hinduism and Buddhism. In order to convince everyone that Hinduism is greater than Buddhism, Brahmins thought of doing some great thing which Buddhists did not do.

Now, Buddhism merely opposes violence in connection with sacrificial ceremonies (Yagnas and Yagas) but does not prohibit meat eating. Buddhist monks eat all kinds of meat including that of cow. (We will see these details elsewhere). Brahmins too used to eat all kinds of meat including that of cow's. But, in order to excel Buddhists, they stopped eating meat completely. As cows and bulls are the animals useful for cultivation, they became 'holy animals' in Hinduism. The other three Varnas including Shudras, imitated the Brahmins and, by and large, stopped eating beef.

Dalits, however, continued to eat beef as before. The reason for this was their utter poverty. It was the duty of the Dalits to dispose the dead cattle of the Hindus who lived inside the village. Since the beginning, it had been the practice of Dalits to consume the meat of the dead animals. Beef was the main part of their food. If they stopped eating it they would not have sufficient food. Hence, they could not give up beef. But beef-eating amounts to offending god in the view of Hindus. Consequently, Hindus began to treat Dalits as 'Untouchables'. Thus, Untouchability became an issue connected with anti-Buddhism and beef-eating. This is the explanation which Ambedkar offered with regard to the origin of Untouchability. In his own words:

> "It is that the Broken Men were Buddhists. As such they did not revere the Brahmins, did not employ them as their priests and regarded them as impure" (Vol. 7, p. 315)...
>
> "To my mind, it was strategy which made the Brahmins give up beef-eating and start worshipping the cow... As a result of the spread of Buddhism, the Brahmins had lost all power and prestige at the Royal Court and among the people. They were smarting under the defeat they had suffered at the hands of Buddhism.... The Buddhists rejected the Brahmanical religion which consisted of Yajna and animal sacrifice, particularly of the cow. The objection to the sacrifice of the cow had taken a strong hold of the minds of the masses especially as they were an agricultural population and the cow was a very useful animal... the

Brahmins could do nothing to improve their position against the Buddhists except by giving up the Yajna as a form of worship and the sacrifice of the cow... What could the Brahmins do to recover the lost ground? To go one better than the Buddhist Bhikshus not only to give up meat-eating but to become vegetarians—which they did. That this was the object of the Brahmins in becoming vegetarians can be proved in various ways" (Vol. 7, p. 345-7).

"It is generally believed that the Buddhist Bhikshus eschewed animal food. This is an error" (Vol. 7, p. 347).

What is the need for Brahmins to become vegetarians when Buddhist monks themselves were non-vegetarians? Ambedkar raises the question and answers as follows:

"The only way to beat the Buddhists was to go a step further and be vegetarians" (Vol. 7, p. 348).

Beef-eating became a religion-related issue instead of merely worldly-practice.

"This happened because the Brahmins made the cow a sacred animal. This made beef-eating a sacrilege. The Broken Men being guilty of sacrilege necessarily became beyond the pale of society" (Vol. 7, p. 350).

"The Broken Men hated the Brahmins because the Brahmins were the enemies of Buddhism and the Brahmins imposed Untouchability upon the Broken Men because they would not leave Buddhism....Can we say that the Broken Men came to be treated as Untouchables because they ate beef? There need be no hesitation in returning an affirmative answer to this question....We may therefore conclude that the Broken Men were exposed to scorn and contempt on the ground that they were Buddhists the main cause of their Untouchability was beef-eating" (Vol. 7, p. 317-20).

"When the cow became sacred and beef-eating became taboo, society became divided into two—the Settled Community became a touchable community and Broken Men became an untouchable community" (Vol. 7, p. 370).

"This difficulty will vanish if it is borne in mind that there was a time when the ancestors of the present day Untouchables were not Untouchables *vis-à-vis* the villagers but were merely Broken Men, no more and no less, and the only difference between them and the villagers was that they belonged to different tribes" (Vol. 7, p. 280).

So far we have seen in Ambedkar's words, how he thought Untouchability had originated: that it had begun just because Dalits did not stop eating beef!

Beef-eating had been there in other countries as well. But Untouchability did not emerge there because there was no distinction between beef-eaters and non-beef eaters in those countries. They did not hold the view that the 'cow is a holy animal'. Moreover, Buddhism and the hatred of Hinduism toward it are specific to India. According to Ambedkar, Untouchability began owing to this specific situation.

1) All that glitters is not gold! All that appears to be 'research' is not research!

Here we need to examine a strange explanation of Ambedkar concerning Untouchables. Ambedkar observes that Untouchables, though experiencing Untouchability since a long time ago, do not consider their caste lower or the Brahmin caste higher. Moreover, they treat Brahmins as unholy and inauspicious. Informing us that some researchers had found this attitude among Untouchables, Ambedkar gives those details as follows:

> "People are so much accustomed to thinking that the Brahmin is the superior of the Untouchables and the Untouchable accepts himself as his inferior; that this statement that the Untouchables look upon the Brahmin as an impure person is sure to come to them as a matter of great surprise. The fact has however been noted by many writers who have observed and examined the social customs of the Untouchables. To remove any doubt on the point, attention is drawn to the following extracts from their writings" (Vol. 7, p. 314).
>
> "The Pariahs, on their part will under no circumstances, allow a Brahmin to pass through their *paracherries* (collection of Pariah huts) as they firmly believe it will lead to their ruin" (Vol. 7, p. 314).
>
> "The castes (Parayan and Pallan or Chakkiyan castes of Tanjore District) strongly object to the entrance of a Brahmin into their quarters believing that harm will result to them therefrom" (Vol. 7, p. 314).
>
> "Brahmins consider great luck will wait upon them if they can manage to pass through the Holigiri without being molested. To this Holiars have a strong objection, and, should a Brahmin attempt to enter their quarters, they turn out in a body and slipper him, in former times, it is said, to death" (Vol. 7, p. 314-15).
>
> "We must ask why the Brahmins refused to officiate at the religious ceremonies of the Broken Men? Is it the case that the Brahmins refused to officiate? Or is it that the Broken Men as impure? Why did the Broken Men regard the Brahmins as impure? What is the basis of this antipathy?" (Vol. 7, p. 315).

By this Ambedkar means that Dalits themselves refused to call Brahmins to officiate ceremonies.

If this information is true, what does it tell? Brahmins used to try to visit the localities and houses of Untouchables! They used to try to officiate at ceremonies in the houses of Untouchables as well! But the Untouchables themselves used to assault Brahmins, kick them and chase them away! They used to even kill them in the past! Despite such incidents of killing, Brahmins did not stop visiting the localities of Untouchables! If they pass safely without any danger, Brahmins would leave those places thinking that they were very lucky.

What can Brahmins do if Untouchables reject them and more over kick them away despite their attempts to interact with Untouchables? What wrong do we find on the part of Brahmins? The fact that Brahmins visited the houses of Untouchables implies that they did not treat Untouchables as 'impure' or 'unholy'. If they had, they wouldn't have visited the houses of the Untouchables, would they? Is it that Untouchables themselves considered Brahmins 'impure'? All this tends to indicate that Brahmins were very good people and Untouchables indulged in cruelty.

Would the Untouchables not think that their castes are inferior and Brahmin caste is superior? Then, what is the problem? If Untouchables themselves think that there are no superior-inferior differences between untouchable castes and the Brahmin caste, why do we need to fight for annihilation of caste?

What is this? Why is this reversal in the whole situation? There is a reversal in the situation because Ambedkar considered some stupid investigation as 'great research'!

Some eminent stupid researcher might have stated that Untouchables did not treat Brahmin caste as superior but treat them as impure. He might have understood incidents in a mediocre fashion.

It is not necessary to treat everything that goes in the name of research as 'great research'. Some researchers claim that they have done great research. But if we examine them they contain cent percent worthless arguments. We ought to reject such researches altogether. We need not put on a pedestal every thing that is called 'research' or to use a Telugu idiom, should not put on our heads. But Ambedkar did this. As soon as somebody wrote that Untouchables did not consider their castes inferior and they kicked Brahmins, Ambedkar was overwhelmed and depicted that information with great joy.

But he could not think that it also proves the fact that Brahmins used to visit the localities of Untouchables. Moreover, if Untouchables thought

that they were not inferior and Brahmins were not superior, then it amounts to their ignorance. This means that Untouchables do not have minimum commonsense to realize that they are in the lowest situation in society! If people who are actually in a low situation cannot realize the fact of their situation, they will not be able to realize that they have to come out of the situation. They cannot make any effort to do so. This means, those who are under the illusion without realizing their situation will harm themselves! It would be a very sad thing if Untouchables remain in this situation. But Ambedkar is very happy about it. He even seems proud of it and says that there is a wrong notion among the people that Untouchables consider themselves inferior, that is not true.

If Untouchables are already equal to Brahmins, what else do they need? What for is the struggle of Ambedkar? Is it to excel Brahmins and make them inferior? Is it not, in fact, 'equality' that Ambedkar wants?

If one starts with a 'wrong' premise, it will lead to any number of wrong conclusions.

Now let us once again return to the question of how Untouchability began?' Certain doubts arise concerning Ambedkar's explanation. Unless these doubts are clarified, we cannot accept his explanation.

The first doubt: why did Dalits become Buddhists? They lived in the outskirts of the village simply for the protection of insiders and they did not have any quarrels with those who lived inside the village. As there was no Untouchability, they did not have any problem arising from it. There was no social prohibition against them. It is Ambedkar who gave all these details. Then, why did Dalits leave Hinduism and embrace Buddhism? Did Dalits become Buddhists because they were poor? Does Buddhism show any path of liberation from poverty? Where did Ambedkar explain why Dalits became Buddhists? What change in their life did Dalits expect while joining Buddhism? Unless there was an appropriate reason for this, Ambedkar's theory will not stand.

The second doubt: Is there any evidence to show that Dalits became Buddhists? There is no such evidence.

> "We have no direct evidence that the Broken Men were Buddhists. No evidence is as a matter of fact necessary when the majority of Hindus were Buddhists. We may take it that they were" (Vol. 7, p. 315).
>
> "It is that the Broken Men were Buddhists" (Vol. 7, p. 315).

We need some 'logic' to build a theory. It is not enough to use such expressions as 'let us suppose' and 'it may be the case'. Ambedkar simply stated that 'Dalits became Buddhists' but he neither showed reasons nor evidence for his claim.

The third doubt: It is not Dalits alone who became Buddhists. 'Majority of Hindus' (p. 315) became Buddhists. There is no prohibition against beef-eating in Buddhism. It is Hinduism and not Buddhism that considered the cow a holy animal. Ambedkar says that even Ashoka who followed Buddhism did not prohibit cow slaughter. This means, there is no scope for the conclusion that all those who became Buddhists stopped eating beef. But it is only the Dalits, who did not stop eating beef, that became Untouchables while others (non-Dalits), who became Buddhists and yet continued to eat beef, did not become Untouchables. Why? Though we have many more questions, we can still consider this theory if we find answers at least to some of them. Otherwise it cannot be called a theory at all.

Let us next consider the period in which Untouchability began.

6 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, 'WHEN' DID UNTOUCHABILITY BEGIN?

When did Untouchability, in fact, begin? Before Christ or after Christ? Approximately which century? Citing examples from the Vedas, Dharma Sutras and Smritis, Ambedkar made an elaborate discussion about this period. This he did in the essay *The Untouchables* (Vol. 7, pp: 359-79).

In the Vedas, there is a mention of certain 'lower castes'. Yet, there is no indication that they were untouchable.

"Thus in Vedic times there was no Untouchability" (Vol. 7, p. 371).

Scholars assume that Dharma Sutras belong to a time centuries before Christ. Vishnu Purana comes under the category of Dharma Sutras. We find the word ' Untouchability' in Vishnu Purana as well as in Katyana Smriti. Further, in some Dharma Sutras, we find the following:

> "On touching... a Chandala... he shall purify himself by bathing dressed in his clothes" (Vol. 7, p. 366).

Ambedkar argues, however, that, though there are words like 'untouchable' and 'Chandala' in Dharma Sutras, we need not assume that Untouchability was prevalent during the period of the Dharma Sutras. He observes that people used to refer the offspring of parents belonging to separate Varnas as 'Chandalas'. People used to consider them 'impure' yet

not 'untouchable'. Clearly we can not assume that Untouchability was prevalent during that period.

Well, then why do we find the word 'untouchables' in addition to the word 'Chandala' in the Dharma Shastras? Further, would it not amount to Untouchability if there were a rule that one has to take a purifying bath if one touches a Chandala? But Ambedkar argues that it does not amount to Untouchability. Then, he ought to explain the meaning of the rule that 'on touching a Chandala, he shall purify himself by bathing dressed in his clothes'. But Ambedkar did not say anything about the term 'bathing' or 'untouchables'. Without saying anything about these words, Ambedkar simply referred to the word 'Chandala' in terms of 'offspring of parents of different Varnas'.

But we get a doubt with regard to the meaning which Ambedkar gave to the word 'Chandala'. He has told us earlier that under Chaturvarna, marriages occurred between all Varnas and the contemporary Shastras accepted them. Then how could 'violation of Varna system' occur? This means, his interpretation of 'Chandala' is not convincing. Moreover, the words 'untouchable', 'bathing' and 'purification' together suggest that ' Untouchability' was prevalent during the period of Dharma Sutras. But, Ambedkar, without accepting this, still concluded,

> "As to the period to the period of the Dharma Sutras, we have seen that there was impurity but there was no Untouchability" (Vol. 7, p.371).

Next, the question of 'Manu Smriti'. Scholars assume the period of Manu Smriti to be 2nd century AD. Whether or not Untouchability was prevalent by 200 AD depends on the question whether or not Untouchability finds mention in Manu Smriti.

In Manu Smriti, words like Chandala, Antya, Antyaja, Antyavasin and Bahya do occur but not the word 'untouchable'. But there are many features which point to ' Untouchability'. For example, we find some descriptions as follows:

> "... the dwellings of the *Chandalas* and the *Shvapakas* shall be outside the village, they must be made *Apapatras* and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys.... Their dress (shall be) the garments of the dead, (they shall eat) their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornaments... their marriages with their equals.... at night they shall not walk about in villages and in towns. ... By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks at king's command, and they shall carry out the corpses (of persons) who have no relatives;... By the king's order they shall always execute the criminals, in accordance

with the law, and they shall take for themselves the clothes, the beds, and the ornaments of (such) criminals" (Vol. 7, pp: 271-2).

In addition, there are other details, there are other pointers as follows:

"When he (the Brahman) has touched a Chandala...he becomes pure by bathing" (Vol. 7, p. 36).

"He who, while carrying anything in any manner, is touched by an impure (person or thing), shall become pure, if he performs an ablution, without pulling down that object" (Vol. 7, p. 366).

It appears that all these descriptions relate to ' Untouchability'. But Ambedkar does not think so. His argument proceeds as follows: This is not Untouchability; it is merely impurity. There is a difference between the two. It is the Brahmin who becomes impure if he touches a Chandala. Hence this is impurity. It amounts to Untouchability only if it causes impurity to all. This, therefore, implies that Untouchability was not present in Manu Smriti. He has not, however, explained the basis for the distinction between impurity and Untouchability.

Although Manu Smriti dictated that Chandalas should live outside the village, Ambedkar still did not consider it Untouchability.

Further, in Manu Smriti there is a question of 'Panchama Varna' (the fifth class). Scholars have debated this issue for hundreds of years. Some cite a sloka in Manu Smriti to the effect that only four Varnas and not five existed! There is no further information about it. They say, whether Untouchability existed during the period of Manu Smriti would become clear if we know the meaning of the statement that 'there was no 'fifth Varna'.

There are two interpretations of 'Fifth Varna' among scholars.

The first interpretation: All persons in the society come under 4 Varnas: Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vysya and Shudra. Persons at the lowest level come under the category of Shudra Varna. There are only 4 Varnas and no fifth Varna. This is the interpretation. This interpretation does not tell us whether Untouchability existed during that period.

The second interpretation: While there were basically four Varnas, there is a part of the population that does not belong to any of those Varnas. They have no Varna. They don't have the name of a particular Varna. This means that still there are only four Varnas in the society and there is no fifth Varna. This is the second interpretation.

All the orthodox scholars give the second interpretation. They say: Untouchability existed during the period of Manu. The untouchables were

Avarnas: those without any Varna. They did not have any Varna. As Untouchables did not have any Varna, Manu said there was no Panchama (fifth) Varna. Avarnas were none else but untouchables. This means that Untouchability existed at that time.

But Ambedkar opposes this interpretation: According to him, Manu's statement that there is no fifth Varna refers to slaves. This we can infer from Narada Smriti. Narada Smriti speaks of the slaves as the fifth class. Similarly, why can we not assume that the expression 'fifth class' in Manu Smriti too refers to slaves? There were slaves but they did not have the problem of Untouchability. Which means, Untouchability was not yet present at that time (Vol. 7, p. 372).

A doubt concerning this argument: there were slaves at that time. Narada Smriti called them 'Panchama Varna' (fifth class). If Manu Smriti too had used the expression Panchama Varna with reference to slaves, then one has to say that there was a Panchama Varna. Why does one say that there was no Panchama Varna? There were slaves, weren't they? Then how can Narada Smriti say 'no', when there was Panchama Varna?

Though no one has understood this 'cry' about 'Panchama Varna', one can easily understand that Ambedkar's argument is totally wrong.

Even if we discuss for hundreds of years, we cannot understand anything about two stray expressions whose meaning is not clear.

The essence of the matter is that, though Manu Smriti dictates that Chandalas should live outside the village, Ambedkar does not consider that 'Untouchability':

> "In the first place, there was no Untouchability in the time of Manu. There was only Impurity. Even the Chandala for whom Manu has nothing but contempt is only an impure person. That being so, this passage cannot possibly have any reference to Untouchables" (Vol.7, p. 372).

This means Untouchability did not exist even during the period of Manu Smriti. This implies that Untouchability did not come into existence until after 200 AD.

But at another place we find Ambedkar mentioning a context which indicates that Untouchability may be found in Manu Smriti.

> "Those whom Manu included within the Chaturvarna correspond to the modern composite class called Hindus. Those whom Manu called Bahayas (outside the Chaturvarna) correspond to the present day untouchables of India" (Vol. 5, p. 279).

If we compare Bahayas of that period with the present day untouchables, does it not mean that the Bahayas had the situation of present

day Untouchability? Does it not amount that Untouchability existed at that period itself? But Ambedkar argues that Untouchability did not at all exist during the period of Manu Smriti.

Another source is Fah-Hian. This man came to India during the period of Gupta kings in 400 AD. One of his descriptions is as follows:

> "Southward from this (Mathura) is the so-called middle-country (Madhyadesa). .. Throughout the country the people kill no living thing nor drink wine, nor do they eat garlic or onion, with the exception of Chandalas only. The Chandalas are named 'evil men' and dwell apart from others; if they enter a town or market, they sound a piece of wood in order to separate themselves; then, men knowing they are, avoid coming in contact with them... The Chandalas only hunt and sell flesh" (Vol. 7, p. 374-5).

Why do people, who do not resort to killing living things, buy 'flesh'? Does it mean that they eat flesh but they don't kill for themselves? Do they eat flesh although they don't eat onion or garlic? Even if we keep these questions aside, we find Ambedkar acknowledging to some extent the fact that Untouchability existed here as per this description. But he says that it was not yet quite Untouchability:

> "It is, therefore, quite possible that the conditions described by Fah-Hian, though bordering on Untouchability, may not be taken as amounting to Untouchability. It may only be extreme form of impurity..." (Vol. 7, p. 378).

It is very clear in Fah-Hian that Chandalas sound a piece of wood so that other caste-people avoid coming in contact with them. Yet, Ambedkar argues that it was not yet complete Untouchability. Why does he object to consider it as Untouchability. It is because he had refused to consider the same kind of features in Manu Smriti as Untouchability. Then, how can he consider the same features as Untouchability here? Hence, he called it 'not full Untouchability but half Untouchability'. But, when we talk of Untouchability it involves one of two things: either touching a person or not touching a person. How can there be half touching or slight touching? 'Half Untouchability' is a meaningless thing. And yet, Ambedkar thinks, 'yes, it is so. It is not yet full Untouchability'!

The period of the Gupta Kings was opposed to Buddhism. During this period, Brahminsim achieved victory over Buddhism, said Ambedkar:

> "...cow-killing was made a capital offence by the Gupta kings some time in the 4th century AD" (Vol. 7, p. 379).

Since then, cow killing has been a crime and beef-eating-Dalits began to face the problem of Untouchability, opines Ambedkar. He also pointed

to evidence from another Chinese traveller. Yuan Chwang came to India in 629 AD. He too recorded the fact that Untouchability existed in India:

> "Butchers, fishermen, public performers, executioners, and scavengers have their habitations marked by a distinguishing sign. They are forced to live outside the city and they sneak along on the left when going about in the hamlets" (Vol. 7, p. 378).

In the account of Fah-Hian, we find reference to the Chandala caste alone. Here, in Yuan Chang's words, we find reference to many more castes.

What is the nature of the occupations of these untouchable castes? Cleaning the dirt (scavengers), cruel acts like execution and such other occupations. We find the same kind of occupations in Manu Smriti (Go back once again and see those details): that Chandalas have to carry the dead bodies of the destitutes and execute the punishments awarded to the offenders.

But Ambedkar, unwilling to consider such facts in Manu Smriti as Untouchability, acknowledges them here as Untouchability:

> "Fa-Hian's description refers to the Chandalas only while the description given by Yuan Chwang applies to communities other than the Chandalas. This is a point of great importance. No such argument can be levelled against the acceptance of a description since it applies to communities other than the Chandalas. It is, therefore, just possible that when Yuan Chwang came to India, Untouchability had emerged... On the basis of what has been said above we can conclude that while Untouchability did not exist in 200 A.D., it had emerged by 600 A.D... We can, therefore, say with confidence that Untouchability was born some time about 400 A.D. It is born out of the struggle for supremacy between Buddhism and Brahmanism" (Vol. 7, p. 378-9).

This implies that according to Ambedkar, Untouchability began around 400 AD. What existed before this period is only 'impurity' but not Untouchability. Though there was clear-cut evidence with reference to the existence of Untouchability, Ambedkar did not at all acknowledge it. The entire evidence is in his essay *The Untouchables?* He wrote this in 1948.

How should readers respond if the writer of the same essay says, after 14 years, in 1956, in another book *Buddha and His Dhamma*, that Untouchability was already prevalent before Christ during Buddha's time itself? Do the readers have to petrify or become senseless? Of course, they will do whatever they have to! Most readers will respond in the same way as I did when I first read this, won't they?

Buddha and his Dhamma constitutes volume 11 of Ambedkar's writings. According to details, Ambedkar gave there, Buddha was born 2,500 years ago and died in the year 483 AD. If Untouchability was prevalent during his time itself, that would imply that it was prevalent before 500 B.C. Note that none else said this fact! It was Ambedkar himself who said this!

In *Buddha and his Dhamma*, Buddha himself converted some untouchables and turned them into Bhiskshus. Ambedkar cited these examples to explain that Buddha rejected caste distinctions and Untouchability, which Hinduism was observing.

In *Buddha and his Dhamma*, under the heading "Conversion of Sopaka and Suppiya, the untouchables", we find the following information concerning Buddha's conversion of the Untouchables:

> "Sopaka was a pariah (untouchable) of Shravasti". Immediately after giving birth to Sopaka, his mother died. The watchman of a cemetery brought up Sopaka along with his own son Suppiya. Sopaka acquired the name of the community to which his mother belonged. "The Blessed Lord (Buddha) one day happened to pass by the cemetery. Sopaka, seeing the Lord, approached him. After saluting the Lord he asked his permission to join him as his disciple. Sopaka was then only seven years old. So the Lord asked him to obtain his father's consent". When Sopaka called his foster father, the father requested the Lord to admit his son to the Order. "Nothing withstanding that he belonged to the pariah community the Lord admitted him to the Order and instructed him in the doctrine and discipline." ... "..Suppiya learned the Lord's doctrine and discipline from his companion, Sopaka, and requested Sopaka to admit him to the Order, although Sopaka belonged to a community which was lower in rank than the community to which Suppiya belonged". (This means, while Sopaka's caste itself is an untouchable caste, Suppiya's caste is still lower than that!) "... Suppiya, a member who belonged to the despised community whose occupation was to perform the duties of watchmen in the cemetery, became a Bhikku" (Vol. 11, pp: 186-7).
>
> "All of them sought from the Buddha permission to become Bhikkus and enter the Order. The Buddha without hesitation and without caring for their low birth or their previous condition, admitted them into the Order" (Vol. 11, p. 188).

Another incident: A young woman named 'Prakriti' belonged to the Chandala caste. She asked Buddha to admit her to the Order. Then Buddha applauded her enlightenment in seeking admission into the Order thus,

> "Blessed art thou, Prakriti, for though you are a Chandalika you will be a model for noblemen and noblewomen. You are of low caste, but

> Brahmins will learn a lesson from you....Having expressed her wish she was admitted into it, though she belonged to the lowest class" (Vol. 11, p. 199-200).

It is not only in the book which he wrote in 1956 but also in another essay *Reformers and their future* which he appears to have written much earlier (we don't have the details of the date of composition of this essay) that Ambedkar observed that Untouchability already existed in Buddha's time. We find the following observations in that essay:

> "In the Aryan Society the Shudra or low caste man could never become a Brahman. But Buddha not only preached against caste but admitted the Shudra and the low caste to the rank of a Bhikku who held the same rank in Buddhism as the Brahman did in Brahmanism... the percentage of low-born members of the Order was probably in fair proportion" (Vol.3, p. 220-21).

Thus we encounter totally different arguments even in the essays written in proximate periods! Mutually contradictory arguments!

Why does it happen so regularly in Ambedkar's writing? Is it merely because of 'forgetfulness'? Is it because that he forgets something he wrote in one essay by the time he wrote another essay? But is this something connected with forgetfulness? Can we find anywhere that a person forgets the theories which himself discovered?

The following is, surely, the essence of the matter. Ambedkar intended to propose a 'new theory' concerning ' Untouchability' that Untouchability came into existence due to the conflict between Hinduism and Buddhism. Hence, he has to reject every piece of evidence that indicates the existence of Untouchability before Buddha! In fact, Untouchability appears in Dharma Sutras which existed long before Buddha. But Ambedkar has to give up the theory if he acknowledges the fact that Untouchability had been there since Buddha's time. He is not willing to give it up. Hence whatever he found in Dharma Sutras is something other than Untouchability.

Well, what about Manu Smriti? Here, Ambedkar committed a much bigger blunder. It is he who gave the information that Manu Smriti belonged to 200 AD. Which means it came 700 years after Buddha. Ambedkar's new theory won't fail if he acknowledges the existence of Untouchability in Manu Smriti. He could accept without hesitation that Untouchability originated from out of the conflict with Buddhism and the same appears in Manu Smriti. But he did not.

This is because he has decided not to acknowledge the fact of Untouchability until the 'prohibition of cow killing' became a law. His

intention is to show the connection between the prohibition on cow-killing and Untouchability. He wanted to say that prohibition of cow-killing became a law in 400 AD during the period of the Gupta kings, that beef-eating became an offence and Untouchability came into practice because Dalits did not stop eating beef. Therefore, Ambedkar is not willing to acknowledge the fact of Untouchability until 400 AD. Though Manu Smriti is subsequent to Buddha, it came surely 200 years earlier than the prohibition on cow-killing? Hence, he refused to acknowledge the existence of Untouchability in Manu Smriti.

Well, that is fine. Then, why this person, who went on arguing like this, did say in *Buddha and His Dhamma* that Untouchability existed in 500 B.C? This is because he has to show how great Buddha is, doesn't he? In order to say that Buddha rejected Untouchability while Hinduism was observing it should we find Untouchability in Buddha's time or not? We should find it. He sticks to the point that suits the occasion! This is a fine way to conduct scholarship!

When a person considers an issue thoughtfully, there is nothing wrong to assume that 'perhaps things might have happened like this and hence this problem might have arisen'. So far there is nothing wrong in this assumption. If the empirical evidence contradicts that assumption, however, one must then abandon the assumption as untenable. But nowhere did Ambedkar do that. He proposed new theories concerning three issues, namely, origin of castes, origin of Shudra Varna and origin of Untouchability. But nowhere did these theories and facts really coincide. Yet he didn't care to note any of the facts, nor did he abandon his theories.

At every place, he exhibited a tendency to claim, 'I have discovered a new theory. Listen to whatever I say! That's all!' He was not concerned with any doubts that arise in connection with his theories. Observe what he says about his theory in his preface to the book *The Untouchables.*

> "This book may therefore, be taken as a pioneer attempt in the exploration of a field so completely neglected by everybody. The book, if I may say so, deals not only with every aspect of the main question set out for inquiry, namely, the origin of Untouchability, but it also deals with almost all questions connected with it. Some of the questions are such that very few people are even aware of them; and those who are aware of them are puzzled by them and do not know how to answer them" (Vol. 7, p. 243).

> "In this sense the book is a work of art even more than of history" (Vol. 7, p. 244).

Thus repeatedly glorifying the soundness of his theory throughout the 'foreword', Ambedkar finally shifted to conventional literary modesty and exhibited his humility as follows:

> "I am not so vain as to claim any finality for my thesis. I do not ask them to accept it as the last word. I do not wish to influence their judgement. They are of course free to come to their own conclusion. All I say to them is to consider whether this thesis is not a workable and therefore, for the time being, a valid hypothesis if the test of a valid hypothesis is that it should fit in with all surrounding facts, explain them and give them a meaning which in its absence they do not appear to have. I do not want anything more from my critics than a fair and unbiased appraisal" (Vol. 7, p. 245).

If he really wanted 'unbiased appraisal', he ought to have abandoned this theory totally. Needless to say again as to why he has to abandon it.

Well, how should we understand the early days of Untouchability according to this essay? According to it, it came into existence in 400 AD. But according to *Buddha and his Dhamma*, it existed during the period of Buddha by 500 B.C. Both are Ambedkar's propositions! Which should we accept? What should we learn from this kind of theories? Are they worth the name theory at all?

The author has humbly asked us to say whether his theory is useful or not. Do we really need to state our view?

7 DO YOU WANT 'UNTOUCHABILITY' OR 'SLAVERY'?

In its early days, the Congress party had to some extent an orientation to certain social reforms—abolition of untouchability and child-marriage and promotion of widow remarriage—along with the political movement opposed to the British rule in India. But gradually there developed a trend which argued that 'it is not time for social reforms. We have to organise political movements first because we have to achieve independence first'.

Ambedkar is totally opposed to this trend. According to him, social reforms like 'abolition of untouchability' must take place first and only then political movements should follow. 'We say that one country should not rule another country. Well then, can Savarna class rule another class in the name of Untouchability? We are furious about atrocities like

Jalianwala Bagh by British rulers. But, can one section of natives commit atrocities on another section of natives? Isn't there any injustice in it?' Ambedkar raises many such questions. All these questions are absolutely correct. We have to fully agree with these questions. There is no justice in supporting 'untouchability' or the 'caste system'.

However, whatever defect there is in the argument of the Congress, namely, 'political movements should take place first', the same defect is there in the argument of Ambedkar, namely, 'social movements should take place first'. If political movements are for the sake of freedom (whether it is real freedom or not is a different question) and if social reforms are for the sake of emancipation from evil practices, both things can happen simultaneously. Those who campaign for freedom can also campaign against untouchability. Similarly, those who campaign against untouchability can also campaign in favour of freedom. Or, they can do this once and do that at another time. Whether you believe that we should not raise the problem of untouchability until we achieve freedom or that we should not talk of freedom unless we abolish untouchability—neither of these assumptions are correct. If the two kinds of movements take place simultaneously to the extent possible, one would influence the other. The two changes would be mutually related. Therefore, the question which ought to come first and which is next becomes meaningless. Both are good. Both have to go together. Such simultaneity is possible.

Different thinkers look at society from different perspectives. They interpret any problem from their respective perspectives. Whatever their theory concerning society, it will have a 'foundation' and a 'superstructure', even if they do not use these terms or grasp this distinction. The 'foundation' of a theory is its 'fundamental' feature. Its 'superstructure' is its 'secondary' aspect. When society faces problems, we need movements concerning both the 'foundation' as well as the 'superstructure'.

Simultaneous occurrence of these movements does not imply that there is no distinction in society between its foundation and superstructure. We should not mix up the question, namely, 'which is primary and which is secondary in society' with the question, namely, 'which movement comes first and which movement comes next'. The two are different issues.

From the viewpoint of Congress leaders, political movements were fundamental and must take place first. The rest will follow. From the view point of Ambedkar, social movements are fundamental and must take place first. The rest will follow. Both these viewpoints are wrong. Whatever be the two perspectives regarding the question 'which is primary', the correct argument is: the two kinds of movements must take place simultaneously in their own way.

In the case of Untouchability, Ambedkar differs with the Congress leaders in another regard. Congress leaders spoke of Untouchability as if it were a very trivial problem. 'In other countries there are still bigger problems. Do you know that there used to be slavery? Is Untouchability a problem compared to such sufferings?'—This is how they argued. To this, Ambedkar answered, 'Untouchability is more oppressive than slavery. Slavery is, surely, less oppressive! His whole argument goes along this line.

But is it an answer? Both slavery and untouchability are oppressive. Both are cruel. The labouring class faces these two forms of oppression due to the class of Masters. Why should we compare the two in terms of 'which is greater and which is less'? Should we suffer a condition because it is 'less oppressive'? We need not tolerate something which is less oppressive, should we? Then why should we compare the two in terms of 'which is more oppressive and which is less oppressive?' Hence, Untouchables should reply as follows: 'should we have untouchability just because there is slavery elsewhere? Slaves over there will tackle their own problem of slavery. Here we will tackle our problem. The question whether untouchability is more oppressive or less oppressive is irrelevant to us. Even if it is proved that untouchability is less oppressive, none have the right to impose it on us'.— This is how untouchables should argue.

But Ambedkar's argument does not proceed along this line. All the time, he attempts to establish that 'untouchability is more oppressive and slavery is less oppressive' and tries to prove this argument. He says that slavery appears to be less oppressive even if we compare the worst period of slavery and the best period of untouchability.

> "I am prepared to allow the comparison of the condition of the slaves in the Roman Empire to be made with the condition of the Untouchables of the present day. It is a comparison between the worst of one side and the best of the other, for the present times are supposed to be in the golden age for the Untouchables" (Vol. 5, p. 14).

According to Ambedkar, facts will prove that Roman slaves were happier than the present day Untouchables, even if we consider two entirely different periods of time. To demonstrate this, Ambedkar depicts sorrows as well as comforts under slavery and finally concludes, that slavery is indescribably comfortable compared to untouchability.

Although this comparison is wrong, we are obliged to examine its validity because Ambedkar's argument is based on such comparison.

We have seen earlier what the condition of untouchables in India is. If we also consider the condition of slaves, we will know whose condition is more oppressive. In order to see the conditions of slaves, we have to

look at the worst period in Roman times. In another context, Ambedkar gave much information concerning this period:

> "As to the slaves there were millions of them. A single rich landholder might own hundreds and even thousands, and it was a poor man that did not have several at least. They were just things to be owned. They were not persons in the eye of the law and had therefore no rights. They received kind treatment from a few humane masters. But generally they were treated with the greatest cruelty. 'If a slave coughs or sneezes during a meal, if he lets a key fall noisy to the floor, we fall into a great rage.... often we strike too hard and shatter a limb or break a tooth,' said Senecca. A rich Roman used to punish his slaves for carelessness by casting them into a fish pond as food for lampreys. The slaves who displeased their masters were ordinarily sent to an underground prison. During the day, they had to work loaded with heavy iron chains. Many were branded with red hot iron. The mill where the slaves had to work is thus described by a Roman author; 'Gods! What poor shrunken up men? With white skins striped with blows of the whip.... They were only the shreds of tunis; bent forward, head shaved, the feet held in a chain, the body deformed by the heat of the fire, the eyelids eaten away by the fumes, everything covered with grain dust." (Vol. 5, p. 76).

This is a small example which Ambedkar cited with reference to ancient Roman slaves. In this description, we don't find such examples as masters throwing slaves into the cages of lions and enjoying the carnage and compelling slaves to wrestle unto death. Next, Ambedkar narrates the plight of slaves exported to America in modern times:

> "Neither the Europeans nor Asians can imagine the kind of sufferings which Negroes experienced. We may describe their sufferings under three heads: sufferings at the time of capture, during their transport and while working... Slave traders used to round up Negroes suddenly in the coastal areas. They used to do this with the help of slave dealers... The chiefs of the tribes used to act as slave dealers and hand over men in their tribe to the slave traders. Enslavement including those of women and children within a tribe became the penalty for less and less serious offences. While transporting Negroes to America, slave traders used to turn men, women, children and every one into a heap and tie them with fetters. The traders used to lock them in the 'slave stick'—a long pole with a crutch at the end for fastening round the neck. They used to make slaves carry on their heads the loads of foodstuffs and ivory. They used to leave slaves to die or kill them if they fell sick during the journey. That is why, the tracks on which slaves walked used to be full of bones. As soon as they reached the coast, they were pushed into the ships specially meant for the slaves. They used to handcuff the slaves in pairs. They used to push the slaves into ships where it is so crowded that people

cannot turn their necks either... Slaves used to suffer a lot with sickness and ailments. Though instruments were provided for forcibly feeding those who refused to eat, about one-sixth of the slaves used to face death. The slave traders used to examine the slaves at the end and keep them ready for sale. The slave masters used to try to conceal the wounds caused due to guns or otherwise. When it was not possible to conceal, they used to give them medical treatment for the wounds. But the agents at the ports often complained that the 'parcels of Negroes' landed were 'bad' or 'mean' or 'much abused'. Finally, on ship board or in the public slave market, the slaves were put up for sale by 'scramble' or auction... Slaves, who some how passed through these hardships and got down to work in the plantations, used to face series of another set of problems. About one-third of the slaves used to die as they could not adjust with the new kind climate, new kind of food and new kind of work. What kind of life did these slaves lead after they withstood all this and survived? The Slave-Masters used to have two rights that were autocratic and indisputable. They were: the right to own and the right to punish..." The punishments inflicted on slaves in this island, are various and tormenting... Among which is the thumbacrew, a barbarious invention to fasten the thumbs together, which appears to cause excruciating pain. The 'iron necklace' is a ring, locked and rivetted about the neck; to these, collars are frequently added.... which prevent the wearers from laying down their heads with any degree of comfort. The 'boots' are strong iron rings, full four inches in circumference; closed just above the ankles; to these some owners prefix chain, which the miserable sufferers, if able to work, must manage as well as they can, and it is not infrequent to see in the streets of this town, at midday. Negroes chained together by these necklaces, as well as the boots... The 'spurs' are rings of iron, similar to the boots, to which are added spikes from three to four inches long, placed horizontally. A chain fastened about the body with a padlock is another mode of tormenting this oppressed race of beings" (Vol. 5, pp: 87-88).

This description of slaves continues for many pages. This kind of situation of modern Negro slaves or that of ancient Roman slaves, according to Ambedkar, is still better than the condition of the present day untouchables!

I wonder if any single untouchable person would agree with Ambedkar's assessment! Will any untouchable, in order to reduce his suffering, like to turn into a slave since it is an intelligent thing to shift from more miserable condition to less miserable condition? Will any untouchable say: "Yes, slavery is less painful than untouchability. I am prepared to become even a Roman slave. Let there be any number of tortures: iron chains around the whole body, iron rings around the neck as well as feet, lashes on the back, 'thumbacrew' punishments, becoming

a prey to the fish in the ponds if masters get angry, fighting with the lions for the entertainment of Masters, wrestling until death... let there be any number of sufferings! All these are petty things! I will definitely become a slave if I can get rid of untouchability'. Does any untouchable say so. Why any other untouchable? Will Ambedkar agree to become a Roman slave or Negro slave? None will agree to that. It is needless to say this specially.

So far we have seen the sufferings of slaves. Now let us see the comforts and joys of the slaves. It is Ambedkar himself who provides this information; it is the basis for his conclusion that 'the condition of slaves is better than that of untouchables'. This information fascinated him.

One Mr. Barrow (there is no information about the country of his origin) wrote a book *Slavery in the Roman Empire*. This book contains descriptions of the comforts and luxuries which the slaves enjoyed during that time. The source of his descriptions is information which a slave master named Pliny provided, who had the reputation of being a very kind hearted person. However, there is also a criticism of the book that 'Pliny's account does not genuinely reflect the existing reality'. The meaning of this criticism is that the information is not correct. But the author of the book (Mr. Barrow) did not care for the criticism: "There is no reason for this attitude". This means that 'we need not consider the information in the book as incorrect'. What else the author of the book would say if not so? Would he say, 'Yes, the information in my book is wrong'? But Ambedkar feels that we can still take the book into account since the author gave a fitting reply. Hence, Ambedkar took the book into consideration. Attaching value to a book which, according to critics, did not reflect reality, Ambedkar felt extremely happy over the comforts of the slaves depicted in the book.

Those comforts were the following: wealthy Masters used to provide training to their slaves in literature and Fine Arts. Some slaves were experts in language. Some slaves knew short-hand. Some worked as Notaries. Some of them were also Grammarians and Librarians. Among slaves, there were Sculptors, Philosophers, Physicians, Specialists, Dancers, Singers, Athletes and athletic Trainers and so on. Almost all the agents in trade were also slaves. Slaves could rent lands from Masters. They could charter banks and ships. They could earn profits and invest capital as well. They were able to buy their freedom. They used to work as secretaries and agents too. They also held government jobs except in the army. Among the slaves of those times, there were persons who held rights over money, land, houses and shops. In this manner, slaves enjoyed 'extraordinary social status'.

In modern times, a Negro, who studied at the Princeton University, ran a school for white students in a county in the state of North Carolina,

America. He used to give sermons at religious gatherings of white people. One of his disciples became a Governor of a state and another a Legislator. Even the whites used to eat in his house.

Thus, after elaborating the 'extraordinary social status of the slaves', Ambedkar notes: Can there be any comparison between the condition of these slaves and that of the untouchables in India? Like Roman slaves, how many untouchables are working as Librarians, Stenographers, Linguists, Grammarians, Tutors, Doctors, Artists and government employees? The doors of these occupations and positions, which were available to slaves, are completely closed to the untouchables even today.

Ambedkar made many other points to prove that 'slavery is better' too: That a master finds some work for the slave and gives him food, whereas an untouchable has to find work for himself; that slavery is obviously legal while untouchability does not appear so even though it is also a kind of slavery. Thus, Ambedkar made many points and finally concludes as follows:

> "Of the two orders, untouchability is beyond doubt the worse... Neither slavery nor untouchability is a free social order. But if a distinction is to be made—and there is no doubt that there is distinction between the two—the test is whether education, virtue, happiness, culture, and wealth is possible within slavery or within untouchability. Judged by this test it is beyond controversy that slavery is hundred times better than untouchability. In slavery there is room for education, virtue, happiness, culture, or wealth. In untouchability there is none.... Neither the crushing of untouchability nor the refusal of personal growth was necessarily inherent in slavery, especially slavery as it existed in Roman empire.... The Untouchable, while he is a free individual, had neither fair start, nor equal opportunity nor square deal. From this point of view, untouchability is not only worse than slavery but is positively cruel as compared to slavery" (Vol. 5, pp: 15-17).

In this way, comparing the two states, the process of glorifying slavery continues for several pages. 'The untouchable has neither fair start nor equal opportunity'—True! Well, does a slave have either fair start or equal opportunity? What a futile argument!

If a human being says that slavery of Roman days too is hundred times better than untouchability, we cannot think of him in any other terms except that his mind is totally closed due to intoxication of vulgar logic. To prove the falsity of the argument that slaves were in a better position than untouchables, it is enough if Ambedkar does not find a single intelligent fellow who would go into slavery from untouchability for the sake of the good aspects of slavery like education, nobility, happiness, culture, wealth etc., which the slavery of Roman days would fetch him!

Ambedkar depicted that slaves take the lands of the masters for rent, hire ships and banks, earn profits and even invest capitals, didn't he? If this had happened, that might mean that a slave employed many slaves under him! It means that he earned profits by exploiting the 'surplus labour' of other slaves! Which means that 'wise' slave had turned into a Master! Ambedkar—who was fascinated by the slaves that earned profits, that invested capitals, that acquired lands, houses and shops—was not at all concerned about the plight of abject slaves who were ruined due to these properties.

Ambedkar gave many descriptions of great slaves. There might be some slaves who received education, who had acquaintance with the Arts and who had jobs involving intellectual labour. Those examples may not be false. But what is the percentage of such great examples in the whole of slave population?

Ambedkar too is not saying that all the slaves were in such a comfortable situation. If we assume that slaves in a better situation constitute 5% of the total slave population, what about the remaining 95%? Did not all those ordinary slaves live like living-dead persons with lashes all over their bodies, with slave-sticks around their necks and with heavy iron rings around their ankles? If all the slaves lived in riches and wealth, who bore the lashes? Should we consider certain conditions that are specific to one in a hundred or a million as general conditions?

Such specific conditions exist not only for slaves but also for untouchables. Didn't Ambedkar, who studied in America and Britain, hold higher positions? R. Srinivasan, who participated in the Round Table Conferences along with Ambedkar, was also an untouchable. Bahadur M.C. Raja was also an untouchable. Agni Bhoj, who was a Minister in the cabinet of Kher, was also an untouchable. M.M. Nandagalekar, who acted as the Deputy Chairman of a Municipality, was also an untouchable. Thus there were many untouchables who held high positions. There were untouchables who received education, who owned property and who were well versed in the Arts. Yet no matter how many specific examples are available, they cannot represent the condition of all the untouchable people. The condition of some people cannot be the condition of all people.

Every slave knows that under slavery the master himself would give him work, he need not look for it. Despite this slaves waged struggles to come out of slavery. They succeeded in getting rid of slavery. They certainly did not choose to remain in slavery just because they did not have to look for work. Will the untouchables agree to become slaves at least to escape from the problem of finding work? No, they won't. They will make their own attempts to find work.

After describing all the 'good qualities' of slavery, ask both untouchables and slaves whether they want their untouchability or slavery to continue? They will immediately say, 'we don't want either of these two! We don't want both! But they won't ask you which is less difficult. This aspect of Ambedkar's work regarding the comforts of slaves is utterly useless! Fools who support untouchability might have prattled. The reply to them can hardly be 'yes, untouchability is more oppressive than slavery. Slavery is less oppressive.' But one should not attempt to conclude which is more and which is less.

We must reject both the propositions equally! Why should there be the question 'which is better, which is worse?'

There is one feature we find in Ambedkar's writings consistently. And that is 'inconsistency'. Which means, none of the arguments meshes consistently with any other. The same thing has happened here. Having depicted repeatedly the comforts and joys of slavery, Ambedkar somehow suddenly hesitated a little and concluded thus:

> "It is therefore overhasty to say that slavery is better than untouchability" (Vol. 5, p. 16).

Again, what is this? Is it 'hastiness' that whatever he argued so far? Does this amount to cancellation of his earlier argument? Well, which of his opinions should we then consider?

8. HINDU REFORMERS ON UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability is part of the 'caste system'. Caste system is itself an integral part of the Hindu religion (Hinduism). Thus, both untouchability and caste system are evil practices and superstitious notions relating to Hinduism.

The only correct solution for the problem of castes is to abandon castes altogether. Non-observance of castes is the only correct solution. Establishing new relationships in life where the word caste is never heard is the only solution. 'How is this possible' is a different question. But this alone is the solution.

The Caste system is an evil practice. For whom? Only for those lower castes who suffer its effect! For those upper castes that receive various 'services' from the people of the lower castes, caste system is not an evil practice but a good practice.

In the name of 'social reform', Intellectuals belonging to upper castes have been searching for a long time for ways which delude the people of the lower castes that the social reform would solve the caste question.

When people speak of Hinduism, there appear two 'great souls', who gained enormous reputation. They are Vivekananda and Gandhi! These persons are famous as great 'philosophers' and 'social reformers'! But both fully support caste system. They, however, propose some trivial and petty changes. They do so because they cannot satisfy the people belonging to lower castes if they don't propose at least such changes. It is enough to see briefly the arguments of these reformers in order to know how faulty, haphazard and meaningless their defence of the of caste system happens to be.

1) Vivekananda (1863-1902)

What we are going to see about this gentleman is not from Ambedkar's volumes. It is from Vivekananda's own book entitled *Caste, Culture and Socialism* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1999).

Let us see the 'knowledge' of Vivekananda relating to caste system.

> "The ideal at one end is the Brahmana, and the ideal at the other end is the Chandala; and the whole work is to raise the Chandala up to the Brahmana" (p. 27).

> "...there are thousands of castes and some are even getting admission into Brahmanahood, for what prevents any caste from declaring they are Brahmanas? Thus, caste with all its rigour, has been created in that manner. Let us suppose that there are castes here with ten thousand people in each. If these put their heads together and say, 'We will call ourselves Brahmanas,' nothing can stop them;..." (p. 27-8).

This means, all the members of a given untouchable caste should declare, 'We are Brahmins!' It is enough if they actually come to think so; then they will become Brahmins! Which means, it is their fault for not having thought like that! 'It is in their hands to think so, isn't it? Why don't the low caste people change their caste?' This is what puzzles Swamiji! Well, let us suppose that all the members of Chandala caste declared thus, "We are Brahmins!" Will all the upper caste people recognize those Chandala caste people as Brahmins thereafter? Will they stop observing untouchability? Will they allow them to enter their houses? Will they begin to establish inter-community dining and marital relationships? Will all these things happen?

Even an insane person will know that none of these things will happen. Those untouchables will remain untouchables. If any untouchable person

says, "I too am a Brahmin", all the Brahmins will laugh and scold him thus, "Get out! Stupid fellow! Will you become a Brahmin merely on your say-so?" Does such a great Swamiji not know such a simple thing? What real service does a reformer do for untouchables if he advises them to consider themselves as Brahmins? If he at least says the same thing to Brahmins—that is if he says, "treat untouchables too as Brahmins like you"—there is some meaning. Though no change would take place, one could still believe that "this Swamiji, well, has said something in favour of untouchables." But advising untouchables to consider themselves Brahmins and criticising them for not considering amounts to shifting the blame on to them. It means that low caste people are themselves failing to get rid of their low caste status!

Hear some more sayings of Swamiji! "I do not propose any levelling of caste. Caste is a very good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow. What caste really is, not one in a million understands."

Now let us know the real meaning of a 'very good thing', namely, caste, which 'not one in a million understands!'

> "The Brahmana caste and the Brahmanya qualities are two distinct things. In India, one is held to be a Brahmana by one's caste; but in the West, one should be known as such by one's Brahmanya qualities. As there are three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—so there are Gunas which show a man to be a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or a Shudra"
> (p. 29-30).

So this is 'what caste really is'. This is the meaning which 'not one in a million understands'. A long time ago, the upper caste reformers began to sing this new song, namely, that caste has nothing to do with birth but with 'quality' (guna). These people do not say that 'there shouldn't be caste differences'. They in fact want caste distinctions. These reformers changed the meaning of caste and invented a new meaning for the term caste, namely, 'that the castes depend not on birth but on quality'—because the low caste people will oppose them if they say that castes should exist as before.

If it is on the basis of gunas (qualities), there has always been a practice in the world to talk about a person as a 'good person' if he is good and 'bad person' if he is bad! Why should one give again caste labels like 'Brahmanhood' for 'good quality' and 'Shudrahood' for bad quality?

If we want to treat castes on the basis of qualities, why don't the qualities of all people become good and castes of all people become one and the same? Why don't the castes disappear altogether then? But it is the strong belief of the reformers that all people do not become good and

bad people will necessarily exist in society! So 'caste is a very good thing', really, when there exist not only good people but also bad people.

"I do not propose any levelling of caste", says Swamiji! This means that Swamiji has no desire to make efforts to convert all human beings into good people!

He says that all the distinctions in the west are on the basis of qualities only. This means, if we summon slaves and slave masters before Swamiji and ask him the basis for these distinctions, he would say, "All bad people are slaves and all good people are masters. Hence these distinctions!" That's nice logic!

Here we are not concerned with the ultra-modern meanings which reformers attribute to the term caste. What we have before us is caste distinction based on the 'birth' of a person This alone is the problem. What are we to do with such castes? A reformer ought to tell as to what should we do with such castes. He has to suggest a way out. But, Swamiji, leaving the actual problems aside, began to offer a strange depiction of the qualities of westerners:

> "The qualities of being a Brahmana or a Kshatriya are dying out from the country; but in the West they have now attained to Kshatriyahood, from which the next step is Brahmanahood, and many there are who have qualified themselves for that" (p. 30).

In the western countries, people can climb one step more and all of them can become Brahmins. Whereas in India people with bad qualities will remain bad forever! For such people the 'Shudra' caste will remain forever!

Well, how to determine these good and bad qualities? Let us learn that 'science' here.

> "...when he is engaged in serving another for pay, he is in Shudrahood; when he is busy transacting some piece of business for profit, on his own account, he is a Vaishya; when he fights to right wrongs, then the qualities of a Kshatriya come out in him; and when he meditates on God, or passes his time in conversation about Him, then he is Brahmana. Naturally, it is quite possible for one to be changed from one caste into another" (p. 33).

So, this is how we must determine the good and bad qualities!

Meditating on God constantly is the quality of a Brahmin. And it is the most superior quality. Engaging in the service of others for pay is Shudrahood! This is the worst quality. People choose these activities 'naturally' and due to qualities that are 'inherent in every man'. Owing

to the inherent qualities, castes form. If all people want to become Brahmins, all have to begin singing hymns. There should be no fool who will perform labour for pay. Then, indeed, all will eat 'grass'! For only grass grows on its own on the earth without anybody's labour!

This is the crudest ignorance of what a human society is, what performance of labour means, what earning of profits means and what human relations in actual reality are! How can a person, for whom hymns praising the God constitute science and good behaviour, understand the problems of society? How can he suggest solutions for the miseries of the sufferers?

Look at the solution which this Swamiji is suggesting to the lower castes!

> 'To the non-Brahmana castes I say, be not in a hurry, do not seize every opportunity of fighting the Brahmana, because, as I have shown, you are suffering from your own fault. Who told you to neglect spirituality and Sanskrit learning? What have you been doing all this time? Why have you been indifferent? Why do you now fret and fume because somebody else had more brains, more energy, more pluck and go, than you!' (p. 102).

> 'Why do you not become Sanskrit scholars? Why do you not spend millions to bring Sanskrit education to all the castes in India? That is the question. The moment you do these things, you are equal to the Brahmana. That is the secret of power in India. Sanskrit and prestige go together in India. The only safety, I tell you men who belong to the lower castes, the only way to raise your condition, is to study Sanskrit, and this fighting and writing and frothing against the higher castes is in vain; it does no good, and it creates fight and quarrel; and this race, unfortunately already divided, is going to be divided more and more. The only way to bring about the levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture, the education, which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have what you want' (p. 102-3).

What the people of lower castes should do is to acquire Sanskrit scholarship. Only then do they attain equality of caste. That is, only then may low caste people become equals of Brahmins! This is the trend in the entire book! He advises lower castes not to fight with higher castes. He says that the bases of the strength of the higher castes are culture and education.

What is the basis of that 'culture' and 'education'? How did Brahmins acquire them? Owing to the 'property' they possess! Owing to their riches! These things do not, however, concern Swamiji.

Should the paupers, who do not have a bellyful of food, become Sanskrit scholars? If they don't, it is their own fault? Is it the reason for their lack of prestige? 'Just because you have not learnt Sanskrit, you remain in the low caste position and face the consequence of your fault, says Swamiji. What a stupid courage!

Will the quality of this person—who suggests Sanskrit scholarship as the solution for lower castes—be that of a Brahman or Chandala? What would be the caste of this gentleman if we apply his own principle—that caste depends on quality—to himself?

2) Gandhi

Next, let us see the invaluable views of Mr. 'Mahatma' Gandhi on the caste system. This gentleman opposes only untouchability while totally defending the caste system. His reform implies that 'castes should remain as before but we ought to give up untouchability'.

> "He said that though he was against untouchability he was not against caste. If at all, he was in favour of it and that he would not therefore carry his social reform beyond removing untouchability" (Ambedkar's volume 9, p. 113).

In fact 'Mahatma' was not opposed to untouchability either. But because Ambedkar was the leader of untouchables and in order to face him in the political field, that is, in order to make untouchables follow him rather than Ambedkar, it was obligatory for Gandhi to oppose untouchability. Only for this reason did Gandhi begin his propaganda against untouchability; otherwise he was not opposed to untouchability as well. We will see evidence for this later.

Here, for the moment, if we see the matter according to Gandhi's claim, he is totally favourable to the caste system. Further, he argued that everybody should practice their respective caste-occupation forever. Examine Gandhi's words as quoted by Ambedkar:

> "It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. *Varna* and *Ashrama* are institutions which have nothing to do with castes. The law of *Varna* teaches us that we have each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. It defines not our rights but our duties. It necessarily has reference to callings that are conducive to the welfare of humanity and to no other. It also follows that there is no calling too low and none too high. All are good, lawful and absolutely equal in status. The callings of a Brahmin—spiritual teacher—and a scavenger are equal,...Both were

entitled to their livelihood and no more. Indeed one traces even now in the villages the faint lines of this healthy operation of the law... I find too that real Brahmins are to be found even in these degenerate days who are living on alms freely given to them and are giving freely of what they have of spiritual treasures" (Vol. 1, p. 83).

In these few words, there are uncountable vulgar thoughts! On the one hand he says that caste is 'harmful both to spiritual and national growth' and on the other hand he says that he is not opposed to caste system but is in favour of it. When someone realizes that something is 'harmful', should he oppose it or defend it? For Gandhi, defending a harmful thing is justice!

'The Varna system defines not rights but duties', according to Gandhi. Why should we value it if it defines only our duties without touching the issue of our rights? For Gandhi, this is also justice!

Gandhi on the other hand eulogizes a Brahmin who lives on alms due to dire poverty as a 'real Brahmin'.

Describing all occupations as equal, he suggests that people should pursue their respective caste occupations!

If the work of a Brahmin and that of a scavenger are equal and if the two are the same, why should a Brahmin not perform scavenger's work? Why should a low caste person perform scavenging work throughout his life? Why shouldn't he teach that people should keep changing their occupations periodically and that all people should by turns, do the 'dirty' work? What is justice about a person leading his entire life as a scavenger?

Ambedkar himself, in fact, raised a very good question in response to Gandhi's preaching that 'people should live on their ancestral occupations'. 'You are a vaisya by birth, why didn't you pursue trade which is your ancestral calling? Why did you enter into politics?'—Thus goes Ambedkar's argument (Vol. 1, p. 90). Should somebody else ask this question? But couldn't Gandhi have asked it himself?

We shall examine the Mahatma's views on 'caste' and 'untouchability' further in subsequent contexts.

3) Radhakrishnan

Professor Radhakrishnan is the chief among that ilk of Hindu pundits who are so insensitive that caste distinctions and untouchability do not bother them even as much as an ant's bite. His eulogy of the glory of Hinduism is not measurable. His eulogy is about the greatness of Hinduism which has been keeping millions as untouchables and as low caste people

for millennia! This gentleman drowns Hinduism with eulogies that it has been flourishing for ages as a great civilization and a great culture and that it has been in eternal existence without being shaken even by innumerable foreign invasions. Thus spake this pundit in his book *Hindu View of Life*:

> "Its historic records date back for over four thousand years and even then it had reached a stage of civilization which has continued its unbroken, though at times slow and static, course until the present day. It has stood the stress and strain of more than four or five millenniums of spiritual thought and experience. Though peoples of different races and cultures have been pouring into India from the dawn of History, Hinduism has been able to maintain its supremacy and even the proselytising creeds backed by political power have not been able to coerce the large majority of Hindus to their views. The Hindu culture possesses some vitality which seems to be denied to some other more forceful currents" (as cited in Ambedkar's Vol. 1, p. 66).

Though Hinduism, which is shining with so much glory, has the ugly side of caste distinctions and the wickedness of untouchability, for which the pundit does not have any concern. 'What is wrong in having castes? What loss has come to Hinduism due to the caste system? It has been in existence in supreme glory, hasn't it?—This is the essence of Radhakrishnan's argument.

But, does 'vitality' of a culture mean injustice and oppression? Does it mean lack of care and concern for fellow human beings? Does it mean oppressing, punishing and exploiting others? What are the higher castes doing to lower castes? Ambedkar expresses the same response to Radhakrishnan, the pundit:

> "It seems to me that the question is not whether a community lives or dies; the question is on what plane does it live. There are different modes of survival. But all are not equally honourable... It is useless for a Hindu to take comfort in the fact that he and his people have survived. What he must consider is what is the quality of their survival....It is a mode of survival of which every right-minded Hindu, who is not afraid to own up the truth, will feel ashamed" (Vol. 1, p. 66).

Owing to the intoxication of their scholarship, these scholars do not know how to feel ashamed for the evils that they defend. Hence, chauvinism has become their way of life which claims that 'our India is great. Our Hinduism is great. Our Sanskrit language is great. Nothing in the world is equal to us.'

4) Reformist Organizations

Not only in their individual capacity but also by establishing organizations, reformers belonging to upper castes resorted to the solution of 'upliftment to untouchables'. Arya Samaj is one such organization. They discovered a method of converting untouchables into Brahmins, namely, putting 'sacred thread' around them (Yagnopavitam)! While one fellow preaches learning of Sanskrit, another preaches wearing of sacred threads! Since wearing of the thread is much easier than learning Sanskrit, some untouchables began to hang sacred threads around their necks zealously and paraded around. Just as Brahmins didn't, the untouchables, who wanted to become Brahmins, did not raise the question either: 'why this thread across the body?' But those sacred threads, which they believed in, did not at all save them from untouchability. There were many incidents in which Brahmin goons attacked untouchables who wore threads and abused them, 'you too wear sacred threads as our equals, do you?' Here are some incidents which Ambedkar mentions:

> "Some Arya Samajists managed to raise the caste of some Untouchables and gave them the sign of the cast, namely, the religious thread worn round the neck. But the mass of the Sanatanists could not bear even this because their religion does not allow the Untouchables to wear the thread. This is why thread-wearing Untouchables are daily persecuted by the high caste Hindus.... Bhagat Harichand of Moila, district Mirpur, Jammu State was purified by the Arya Samajists and given the thread to wear. The Hindu Jats of the place began to victimize him and ask him to put off the thread. Harichand however remained steadfast on his religion. At last one day when the Bhagat Harichand had finished the Gaitri Path, he was caught hold of by the Hindu Jats and severely beaten and his thread broken... The Hindu Rajputs of the village Ramani, near the town Berhampur, Distt. Gurdaspur, called the Untouchables of their villages from their homes and ordered them to cut off the holy thread at once and swear never to put it on again otherwise their lives were in danger. Upon this Untouchables calmly replied 'Maharaj why are you angry with us. Your own brothers, the Arya Samjists have very kindly put these thread round our necks and have ordered us to always protect them for they are the true symbols of the Hindu faith. If you take objection to them, you can tear them off our bodies with your own hands'. Upon this the Rajputs fell upon the poor men with their lathis and kept on thrashing them for a long time. The Untouchables put up with this persecution with great fortitude and refused to resist or protest. But their torments took no pity on their helpless condition and three or four Rajputs actually tore the holy thread off the body of a Harijan named Gor Ram and bruised his body with a hoe in mock imitation of the sign of the thread" (Vol. 5, pp. 45-6).

Untouchables not only began this movement of wearing sacred threads but also performing Sandhya rituals and chanting of mantras!

> "They had taken the sacred thread and made it a part of their duty to perform 'Sandhya'." (Vol. 5, p. 45).

But none of these crazy and stupid practices had uplifted untouchables out of their problem. To people of the lower castes, imitating the upper castes in dress and speech appeared as one way to escape from their lowly social position, and changing their caste names into Sanskrit and adding the word 'Brahmin' to the caste names appeared as another way. While people belonging to the Barber caste became 'Nayi Brahmins', goldsmiths became 'Vishwa Brahmins'. In Maharashtra, Sonars (goldsmiths) became 'Daiwajna Brahmins'. While 'washermen' (dhobis) became Rajakas, others became something else. However much one may change lower caste names into Sanskrit and decorate them by adding Sanskrit words to them, Rajakas are bound to wash clothes, Nayis have to cut the hair of Brahmins. Call an occupation by any name, it is the people of the lower castes alone who perform it. Even if you give a Sanskrit name for the work of scavenging, what one actually does is dirty work.

No reformer thinks of the 'labour' which lower castes perform. Those castes have to perform all those labours as before. They have to remain in the same status forever; of course, wearing sacred threads!

Ambedkar did not oppose wearing of threads and performance of Sandhya by Untouchables. Nowhere does Ambedkar question untouchables thus, 'what sort of reform is this? How do our lives change due to this reform?'

People facing any problem cannot go even one step forward if they depend on haphazard and vulgar reforms. They cannot live with self-respect even for a single hour of the day.

That is the case of the Untouchables! It is surprising that the leader of Untouchables does not know this plain, self-evident, glaring fact!

9 BEWARE OF 'MAHATMAS'!

Gandhi declared, "I am opposed to Untouchability". But many incidents prove that he was in fact not opposed to Untouchability.

If we want to understand the movements of Untouchables or Ambedkar, we have to understand Gandhi. There are some incidents that

relate to both of them. The Congress party began in 1885 at Bombay. Its Calcutta convention of 1917 passed a resolution opposing Untouchability, but abandoned it later without even talking about it again.

The Congress party came under Gandhi's leadership by 1920. Leadership does not mean that Gandhi was either the president or the secretary of the party. He was an unofficial leader, teacher and prophet.

The Congress party actually began to pay attention to the question of Untouchability starting with its Bardoli Conference in February 1922. This conference resolved that the Congress must establish with its own funds separate wells and separate schools for the Untouchables. A part of the resolution was that it must conduct a campaign so as to enable Untouchables to use government schools and common wells.

What Untouchables need is the right to use common resources equally with Hindus. It is not the question of just fetching 'water' or just getting access to 'education'. Hence, campaign concerning the use of common resources should be the important issue in the fight against Untouchability. But, instead of concentrating on what it actually must do, the Congress party was making some separate arrangements here and there in an attempt to console Untouchables.

Separate arrangements for Untouchables, indeed, produced a strangely contrary result: the Congress party began to receive reports that Hindus, who until then had not observed Untouchability, began to tell Untouchables not to come to the common wells since "the congress people are arranging special wells for Untouchables"! So they advised them: "You too ask for such arrangements". Yet, neither Gandhi nor other leaders did learn anything from such reports.

Shraddhananda Swami, an Arya Samajist, was a member in the anti-Untouchability committee which the Congress party started. He was a staunch opponent of Untouchability. He asked the committee to sanction some money for his campaign against Untouchability. The Congress party, which was spending lavishly on many programmes the money which it collected in the name of 'Tilak Swaraj Fund', refused to give even the tenth part of the amount which Shraddhananda had asked for the sake of activities connected with Untouchability. Owing to this attitude, Shraddhananda resigned from the committee. Gandhi neither listened to Shraddhananda's complaint nor attempted to know about it by talking over with Shraddhananda.

Gradually, the Congress party handed over its anti-Untouchability struggle to its cultural organization 'Hindu Mahasabha'. This was a 'militant' organization of Hindus. Its aim was to sustain Hindu culture.

'Social reform' was something which did not find a place in its imagination either. Thus did the Congress party wash its hands of the subject by handing over the responsibility of fighting Untouchability to a communal organization.

The struggle of the Congress against Untouchability—which began with audacious and astounding declaration that it was not possible to achieve independence without eliminating the evil of Untouchability—dissipated itself very quickly under the auspices of Hindu Sabha. As Ambedkar put it,

> "And even such a timid and mild programme the Congress was unable to carry through and which it gave up without remorse or shame" (Vol.9, p. 24. We find the relevant details in the book *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables?* There is also lot of information in chapters 24 & 25 "Under the providence of Mr. Gandhi" and "Gandhi and his fast" of volume 5).

1) Beginning of efforts for Reservations

'Depressed classes' held a meeting in Bombay on the 11th November 1917 under the chairmanship of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar (Vol. 9, p. 14). Ambedkar had not entered the field of politics at this time.

While declaring its loyalty to the British government, the meeting made an appeal. Pointing out that the depressed classes were facing the problem of Untouchability and leading miserable lives, the meeting appealed to the government to grant them the right to elect their own representatives to the legislative councils. Thus, the struggle for the reservation for Dalits, which began even before Ambedkar, reached an important stage by the time the Round Table Conference was held at London in 1930.

The British government arranged the Round Table Conference to discuss self-rule in India and invited some Indian representatives to London. Ambedkar and R. Srinivasan attended that conference as representatives of Dalits. Since the Congress party boycotted the conference, no one from the Congress participated in it at all.

In that Conference, the representatives of Dalits submitted a document concerning the rights of Dalits. It demanded equal civil rights for Untouchables on par with others before self-rule in India began. Demand for separate constituencies ('Separate electorates') for Untouchables was the main issue in the document.

The British government assured rights for Untouchables and minority religious communities under the label of 'Communal Award'.

According to the 'Communal Award', untouchable voters would have two votes each. They would be able to use one vote to elect an untouchable representative and another vote to elect a general representative. While electing an untouchable representative from a constituency, Untouchables alone would have votes. Hindus would have nothing to do with this election. The untouchable candidate would depend on the votes of Untouchables but not on Hindus' votes. The successful candidate would enter the legislative council as a person whom Untouchables alone have elected. When a general election took place in the same constituency, individuals from any caste would be able to contest as candidates. Voters may belong to any caste. An untouchable voter would participate in this 'general' election and elect either a Hindu candidate or an untouchable candidate of his choice. This means, he would use his second vote for this 'general' election. Thus, the Communal Award guaranteed special rights for Untouchables. This is something that pleases Untouchables.

Later, in 1931, Gandhi attended the Second Round Table Conference as the representative of the Congress Party since a compromise had been worked out between the Congress and the British government.

Every time he spoke, Gandhi, glorified himself and ridiculed other delegates. He depicted them as arm-chair politicians, as leaders without any followers and as dishonest persons. To the Muslim representatives, he said that he represented the Muslim masses better than they did. He claimed that the Depressed class delegates did not represent their class, but that he did. He made these claims repeatedly at the end of every speech (Vol.5, p. 288).

In the same conference, on September 15, 1931, Gandhi said: The Congress party has been concerned with the problem of Untouchability. It knows that unity of Hindus and Untouchables is as necessary as the unity of Hindus and Muslims. After listing such claims for some time, he referred to the question of the 'special electorates' and declared that he would oppose them. The interests of Untouchables are also like those of others. I don't accept the special treatment to any one particular group. I don't accept special treatment of the Untouchables either, said Gandhi.

Concerning the special treatment of Muslims and Sikhs, however, Gandhi's argument proceeded along the following lines: It is a different issue. They are two different religions. They are always different. That is not the case with Untouchables. They are also Hindus. If separate electorates are given to Untouchables, Hindus will split into two. I can not tolerate that.

What happened to this argument when Congress party proposed to provide separate wells and separate schools for Untouchables? Didn't

Hindus split at that time? Does observance of untouchabilility not mean division of Hindus into two sections already?

Gandhi says that he would not accept special treatment to Untouchables as if they are asking for privileges. Providing additional opportunities, while there are equal opportunity to all, would amount to privileges. But, when a group of people are far away from equality and when the government makes some provisions for their protection, one should not consider them privileges. They are merely 'protective measures'.

In the same conferences, Gandhi proclaimed himself the real representative of the vast masses of the Untouchables:

> "I claim that I would get, if there was a referendum of the Untouchability, their vote, and that I would top the poll" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol.9, p. 68).

He further claims:

> "But the separate electorates that he seeks will not give him social reform. He [Ambedkar] may himself mount to power and position but nothing good will accrue to the 'Untouchables'. I can say all this with authority, having lived with the 'Untouchables' and having shared their joys and sorrows all these years" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, p. 353).

If Gandhi can speak 'with authority' about Untouchables, Ambedkar, is himself an untouchable, can surely speak with greater authority, can't he? In that case, Gandhi should follow Ambedkar in this matter, shouldn't he?

Gandhi put forward the following suggestion with regard to eradication of Untouchability:

> "Let this Committee and let the whole world know that today there is a body of Hindu reformers who are pledged to remove this blot of Untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our census Untouchables classified as a separate class... I say that it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of the Untouchables of India. It will create a division in Hinduism.... I do not mind Untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth in the villages" (Vol. 9, pp. 68-9).

This means, according to Gandhi, it is the committee of Hindu reformers that may undertake the job of eradicating Untouchability. Therefore, Untouchables need not raise the issue of 'reservations'. Gandhi cannot tolerate it! Thus there was no consensus on the question of reservations for Untouchability. Further, the question of separate electorates

to Muslims and Sikhs has not been settled either. "There is no question of independence to you unless you arrive at a consensus on all these issues", the British government made it clear. Which means, all the round table conferences had failed totally!

All participants in the conference considered that the mediation of a gentleman might work as a solution. Ambedkar recalls the situation as follows:

> "The Chairman knowing that there was no hope of getting an agreed solution before adjourning the Minorities Committee *sine die* made a suggestion to the delegates. He said:- 'Will you, each of you, every member of this Committee, sign a request to me to settle the community question and pledge yourselves to accept my decision? That, I think, is a very fair offer... I do want any section, or any one man. Will the members of this Committee sign a declaration asking me to give a decision, even a temporary one, on the community question, and say that you will agree? I do not want it now. I say, will you put your names to it and give that to me, with the assurance that the decision come to will be accepted by you and will be worked by you to the best of your ability in the course of the working of the new constitution? I have asked several sections—at least, individuals—from time to time for that, and I have never got it. That would certainly straighten out the position..."
> (Vol. 9, p. 69).

Finally all delegates, including Gandhi, accepted the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald as the mediator and signed the declaration accordingly.

During the last days of the conference, Gandhi discussed with Ambedkar a wonderful scheme according to which Untouchables could participate in elections even without reservations.

> "The scheme was as follows: Depressed Class candidates might stand in the general electorate as against other high caste Hindu candidates. If any Depressed Class Candidate was defeated in the election, he should file an election petition and obtain the verdict that he was defeated because he was an Untouchable. If such a decision was obtained, the Mahatma said he would undertake to induce some Hindu members to resign and thus create a vacancy. There could be then another election in which the defeated Depressed Class candidate or any other Depressed Class candidate might again try his luck as against the Hindu candidates. Should he be defeated again, he should get similar verdict that he was defeated because he was an Untouchable and so on *ad infinitum*" (Vol.9, p. 315).

This is how the scheme goes! It is needless to say that Ambedkar did not accept the scheme.

While he was in London, Gandhi tried to enter into a pact with the Muslim leaders on the condition that they too oppose reservations for Untouchables. But things did not happen as Gandhi expected (Vol. 5, p. 320). Vexed with the Round Table Conference, and as had no supporters but only critics, Gandhi soon turned his face towards home. All the Congress leaders knew that he had totally failed in the Round Table Conference. Yet they made grand arrangements to welcome Gandhi upon his disembarkation in Bombay on December 28, 1931 by the time.

Let us see briefly what that felicitation was like in the words of Pattabhi Sitaramayya:

> "There were gathered in Bombay representatives of all parts and Provinces in India to accord a fitting welcome to the Tribune of the people. Gandhi greeted the friends... There was a formal welcome in one of the Halls of Customs House and then a procession in the streets of Bombay which kings might envy in their own country" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, p. 290).

While Gandhi received this 'grand welcome', thousands of Untouchables repudiated Gandhi with *grand insult* through their protest 'demonstrations'. They brought out a leaflet containing 10 questions. It contained the following statements:

> "Our charge sheet against Gandhiji and Congress... Enough of patronising attitude and lip sympathy. We ask for justice and fair play... Attempts are being made to show that Gandhiji and the Congress alone represent the Depressed Classes by presenting addresses through a handful of hirelings and dupes. Is it not our duty to demonstrate the fact by coming out in thousands and proclaiming the truth? This is our charge sheet against Gandhiji and the Congress... This untouchable demonstration included men and women. The demonstrators numbered thousands, all waving Black Flags as a mark of repudiation of Mr. Gandhi. They were a determined crowd and, despite intimidation by the superior forces of the Congress assembled there to welcome Mr. Gandhi, were bent on showing that they repudiated Mr. Gandhi. This led to a clash and blood was spilt. There were forty casualties on each side. For the first time Mr. Gandhi was made aware that there could be black flags even against him. This must have come to him as a shock" (Vol. 5, pp. 293-23).

While returning to India from London, Gandhi, in an interview, told a reporter that he would start a movement of disobedience. After the felicitation functions were over, the government arrested Gandhi and put him in Yerawada jail.

Gandhi started writing letters to the British government from the jail asking it not to accept reservations for Untouchables. This he did ignoring

the fact that he had signed the declaration accepting the mediation of the Prime Minister!

Gandhi, in his letters, argued that Hindus would be angry with Untouchables if reservations were to be introduced, that they would not like to change, that Untouchability would not disappear and hence there shouldn't be any hurdles to the efforts of the Hindu reformers.

He argued thus:

> "Do you realize that if your decision stands and the constitution comes into being, you arrest the marvellous growth of the work of Hindu reformers, who have dedicated themselves to the uplift of their suppressed brethren in every walk of life?" (Vol. 9, p. 87).

The real worry of Gandhi may not have been that reservations would harm Untouchables but would do good to them!

The government did not accept Gandhi's arrangement though he dumped many letters upon them. They made it clear that changing the assurances made in the communal award was not in their hands.

"If it is so, I shall commence fast unto death. I cannot tolerate division of Hindus", saying thus, Gandhi commenced his fast on September 20, 1932 in Yerawada jail.

What sort of fair play is this? One should counter a political problem politically, shouldn't one? If Gandhi really believed that reservations would harm Untouchables, he could propagate the idea among Untouchables. If Untouchables still refuse to give up their demand, he would then have to leave it to their decision. If that demand really harms them, the Untouchables would themselves realize thus, "we didn't heed the advice of Mr. Gandhi". Gandhi, therefore, should have simply propagated his idea among Untouchables. In the Round Table Conference he had loftily claimed that Untouchables would heed only his words, hadn't he? Therefore, he could have asked for an opinion poll of the Untouchables on the subject of reservations. That would have been somewhat reasonable. But, what sort of fair play is it to refuse to follow reasonable path but resort to a threat instead (I will stop eating and die if Untouchables ask for reservations)?

None of the Congress leaders remonstrated with Gandhi, 'This is meaningless'. Instead, they brought pressure on Ambedkar to give up the demand for reservations.

Ambedkar was the main representative of Untouchables. Unless he accepts, it would not be possible to change the provisions of the Communal Award. The whole problem fell on Ambedkar. Gandhi sat over there without taking food. Days were passing. To escape from this predicament

either Ambedkar would have to agree or Gandhi would have to end his fast. If none of these things would happen, Gandhi's death was certain.

> "The situation at this time was tense. Gandhi's foreign friends began to glorify Gandhi's fast as a 'second crucifixion' and 'martyrdom'" (Vol.5, p. 356).

While this was going on, the leaders of Untouchables like M. C. Raja went up to Gandhi and began to say that they (the Untouchables) did not need separate electorates. This Raja was a staunch opponent of the Congress. But as the British government invited Srinivasan but not him to the Round Table Conference, Raja felt unhappy, became a follower of Gandhi and opposed reservations. He said:

> "I contend that this privilege we have already enjoyed under the Montford reforms which have enabled us to get representation in numerous local bodies and in legislatures both provincial and central.... we feel that the moral conscience of the Hindus has been roused to the extent that our salvation lies in bringing about a change from within the main body of Hindu society and not segregating ourselves from them" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, pp. 357-8).

Ambedkar's group alone was insisting on separate electorates.

Congress leaders were busy negotiating with Ambedkar. Ambedkar described the situation as follows:

> "Of course I was held out as the villain of the piece. I had of course my own view of Gandhi's fast. I described it as a political stunt. His utterances had to me always the ring of falsity and even of insincerity. I had always the feeling that what actuated Mr. Gandhi to fast against the Communal Award was not any desire to liberate the Untouchables as to save the Hindus from disruption. He was prepared to do that at any cost, even at the cost of political enslavement of the Untouchables" (Vol. 5, p. 356).

> "As to myself it is no exaggeration to say that no man was placed in a greater and graver dilemma than I was then. It was a baffling situation. I had to make a choice between two different alternatives. There was before me the duty, which I owed as a part of common humanity, to save Gandhi from sure death" (Vol. 9, p. 88).

> "No one except his own followers was convinced that Mr. Gandhi's fast had any moral basis and if Gandhi got a second lease of life, he owes it entirely to the generosity and goodwill shown towards him by the Untouchables" (Vol. 5, p. 343).

Though it appears outwardly as 'good will' and 'generosity', the real reason, however, was that there was no adequate fighting capacity and unity

among Untouchables. Showing mercy by Untouchables towards those who oppose their interests implies showing mercilessness towards themselves. It was not the responsibility of Untouchables to save 'Mr. Gandhi'. Gandhi himself was responsible for his political tactics. Or other Congress leaders were responsible. They should have remonstrated with Gandhi, made him withdraw his fast and save him. They, in fact, should have argued strongly with Gandhi before he started fast. If none of these things happened, were the Untouchables responsible for it? Instead of saying that 'Untouchables showed their good will and generosity toward Gandhi', it would have been realistic and self-critical if Ambedkar had said that 'the Untouchables did not have the strength to withstand the situation'.

On the whole, Ambedkar had 'compromised' with Gandhi with lot of agony and dissatisfaction. This is a fact.

The compromise was this: the Untouchables would have reserved seats. Though only Untouchables would contend for those seats, the voters would include not only Untouchables but also Hindus. This is a 'common electorate' system. Untouchable candidates could enter legislative assemblies through this system as well. But, in its essence, there was a great deal of difference between the election of an untouchable candidate exclusively by untouchable voters and by both untouchable as well as Hindu voters.

In the system where untouchable voters alone elect an untouchable candidate, the untouchable voters would definitely be able to elect only a person whom they trusted; who would be committed to their interests. As such a candidate depends exclusively on the votes of Untouchables, he would be favourable to the interests of Untouchables. But in the system of general electorates, Hindu voters would constitute the greater numbers. Since the untouchable candidate depends mainly on Hindu voters, he would be more favourable to the interests of Hindus.

If we suppose that two untouchable candidates contested for one reserved seat and voters were only Untouchables, a candidate who is favourable to the Untouchables would be elected. But, if there were Hindu voters as well, a candidate who is subservient to Hindus would get more votes. Thus, it is possible that common electorates would harm Untouchables and benefit Hindus.

Gandhi's original intention when he started his fast was to oppose the proposal of reservations in any form. But as the representatives of the Untouchables did not agree to give up the demand for reservations wholly, Gandhi had to accede to the demand of Untouchables for 'reserved seats' at least in order to save his life. And yet he could make it ineffective for Untouchables to the extent possible. Gandhi's heart did not break despite

splitting of Hindus due to the system of 'reserved seats'. It could remain intact.

(Here, the information concerning these constituencies is very brief and half baked. See collected volumes of Ambedkar for precise details!)

In lieu of his compromise in the demand for reservations, Ambedkar asked for more seats than prescribed in the Communal Award. And Gandhi had to oblige it.

Both Hindus and Untouchables arrived at a pact although Hindus did not like to give more seats to Untouchables and Untouchables did not like the common electorate. As they arrived at the pact in Poona, this is called the Poona Pact. They arrived at this pact on September 24, that is on the fifth day after Gandhi started his fast unto death.

Somehow, the Mahatma managed to go without food for four days, reduced the gain of the Untouchables to considerable extent, got up from the fast and consumed food once again with a happy feeling that he could benefit Hindus and cause loss to the Untouchables.

Ambedkar concluded the chapter 'Gandhi and his Fast' with the words:

"Beware of Gandhi!" (Vol. 5, p. 395).

The Congress party started with a big noise their social reforms for Untouchables only since Untouchables began to demand for 'reservations'. Temple entry for Untouchables is one such reform.

Episode of Guruvayur temple: (This information is in Vol. 9, pp. 115-117; Vol. 5, p. 388).

There is a temple of Krishna at Guruvayur in the Ponnani taluk of Malabar. The Zamorin of Calicut is the trustee of the temple. A Hindu by the name Kelappan, under the influence of Gandhi, began attempts to secure entry into the Krishna temple and asked the temple trustee for permission. But the trustee refused and made it clear that, according to law, he did not have the right to do so. In fact he did not have the right. Yet the trustee could have taken some initiative and given an opportunity to the Untouchables. But, as he himself did not like the idea, he expressed his inability under the pretext of law.

But Kelappan did not give up the issue and began a fast under the full glare of the sun in front of the temple on September 20, 1932. It was on the same day that Gandhi also began his fast at Yerawada jail. But Gandhi's fast ended on 24th while Kelappan's continued for 10 days. As

this became a headache to the trustee, he sought Gandhi's help in making Kelappan withdraw for the present. Gandhi at once sent a message to Kelappan asking him to stop the fast for the present and give the trustee some time! Kelappan respected Gandhi's advice, stopped his fast and gave the trustee 3 months' time.

All the three months had passed. The trustee remained tight lipped. Since Kelappan complained about this to him, Gandhi sent a telegram to the trustee informing him that he too would begin a hunger strike along with Kelappan if the trustee did not permit the Untouchables to enter the temple on or before the coming January 1st. But the trustee remained unmoved. He did not say anything other than what he said earlier, "I don't have the right to give such permission". Then Gandhi should have begun his fast, shouldn't he? But, instead, he put forward a new argument: we need to collect the opinions of Hindus in the taluk where the temple is located. I will not fast if the majority of Hindus do not agree for the entry of Untouchables. I would commence fast if the trustee does not agree even after the majority Hindus agree'.

Well, then, they held a referendum. They restricted voting only to those who visited the temple daily. They did not include all those who were not eligible to enter the temple, nor those who did not visit the temple despite being eligible to do so. Of those who were eligible to enter the temple, 73% participated in voting. Of these 56% voted in favour of temple entry for Untouchables, 9% against the entry and 8% remained neutral while 27% abstained from voting. This means that the majority of Hindus had agreed to the temple entry of Untouchables! And still the trustee did not agree! Then, Gandhi was expected to go on hunger strike. But the 'Mahatma' brought forth another argument: The Congress party is going to introduce a Bill on the temple entry of Untouchables in the Madras Assembly. We will come to know after January 15 whether the Viceroy permits the Bill or not. Hence, I am postponing indefinitely the fast which I have proposed to start on January 2. I postpone this at least until Viceroy declares his decision. (For actual quotation, see Ambedkar, Vol. 9, p.117).

The essence of that Bill on temple entry was meant to give the right to the trustees of the temples to permit temple entry of Untouchables since the trustees at the moment did not have such a right. But, even according to this proposed Bill, still a referendum has to be held in the temple area. The trustee would have the right to permit temple entry of Untouchables only if the majority of Hindus agreed. Temple entry for Untouchables only if the majority Hindus agree! Obviously, the proposed Bill depended on the mere kindness and mercy of Hindus!

Gandhi put all his hopes on the defeat of the Bill thinking that the

Bill won't get an entry in the Assembly and the threat of a fast would stop hanging over his head. But, the Viceroy permitted the entry of the Bill!

Then, Gandhi had no option left, had he? He ought to have started the fast. But, Gandhi did not utter a single word about it! It seems that his dreadful dream at Yerawada prison —where he did not take food for four days—was a great revelation for him. Perhaps he understood pretty well that one should simply make declarations about 'fast' but never actually commence one because that would endanger his life. Ambedkar had yielded to a four-day fast earlier; who knows whether the Zamarin of Calicut would yield at all? The proposed Act was in his favour and he had no need to yield. Gandhi, the man of wisdom, thought about all this and stopped talking about the fast! None could ask the Mahatma anything. Kelappan too was tired of Gandhi's behaviour and packed up his social reform.

Listen what Gandhi said during the same period when he was declaring that he would go on a fast for the entry of Untouchables into the Guruvayur temple,

> "During certain hours of the day the Guruvayur Temple should be thrown open to the Harijans and other Hindus, who have no objection to the presence of the Harijans and during certain other hours it should be reserved for those, who have scruples against the entry of the Harijans" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, p. 388).

Gandhi described a custom practised in the Guruvayur temple as follows:

> "...in connection with the Krithikai Ekadashi festival in Guruvayur, the Harijans are allowed to enter side by side with the Hindus and then the temple or the idol undergoes purification" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol.5, p. 388).
>
> "Asked if his suggestion was that the temple might undergo purification daily after the entry of the Harijans, Mr. Gandhi replied: "Personally, I am opposed to purification at all. But if that would satisfy the conscience of the objectors I would personally in this case, raise no objection to purification" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, p. 388).

Gandhi further tells Untouchables: The Hindus are already allowing you into the temple on certain auspicious days, aren't they? So, you have to understand their objections to your entry on the remaining days.

Gandhi advises Untouchables how they must view the whole question:

"The Harijans' attitude should be this, 'if there is a person who objects

> to my presence, I would like to respect his objection so long as he (the objector) does not deprive me of the right that belongs to me and so long as I am permitted to have my legitimate share of the days of offering worship side by side with those, who have no objection to my presence, I would be satisfied" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5; p. 388).

Hindus will have the right to enter the temple on any day and all days, whereas Untouchables would have the right on one or two days in a year; that too on the condition of subsequent purification of the temple. Pointing out such rights as these, Gandhi was trying to tell Untouchables that all people have equal rights in this matter. 'You have the right to go to the temple on some days; don't you? Let Hindus also have the right not to permit you into the temple', this is how Gandhi's argument goes. If Untouchables are able to stop Hindus entering the temple on some days just as Hindus did in the case of Untouchables, then one can think that all people have 'equal rights'. Should Untouchables remain satisfied with the right of temple entry for two days in a year and believe that they have 'legitimate' right? If Untouchables already enjoy such a legitimate right, then why all these temple entry movements and fasts?

2) Beware of 'Deputy Mahatmas'!

'Drama' of temple entry 'Bills': Ranga Iyer, a Congressman, introduced the Temple Bill in the central legislature on March 24, 1932. Gandhi entrusted the responsibility of securing the support for the Bill from other parties as well as the general public to Rajagopalachari and Birla. As that Bill was at the mercy of the majority Hindus, Ambedkar and other leaders of Untouchables refused to render their support. That Bill was in circulation for public opinion until August 1934.

> "A strange thing happened. The Government of India decided to dissolve the Assembly and order new election. The result of this announcement was a sudden change in the attitude of the congress members in the Central Legislature towards Mr. Ranga's Bill. One and all stood out against it and refused to give any further support to the Bill. They were terrified of the electorates. Mr. Ranga Iyer's position was very pitiable" (Vol. 9, p. 120).

It was Rajagopalachari who originally started the campaign against the Bill! The reason that he gave was this: Since Hindu voters have been asking the Congress candidates whether they assure that the Congress would not interfere in the religious matters, it is inevitable to give up this Bill'.

Unable to bear this betrayal, Ranga Iyer gave a speech in the legislature abusing the Congress party as well as Rajagopalachari. He

described Rajagopalachary's stand as 'betrayal' and Congress as an organization of 'masqueraders'.

Well, how did Gandhi act in this context? We really must take note of this. Since the days of his fast at Yerawada jail, he had been claiming that he is deeply interested in the problems of Untouchables. In a statement issued on November 4, 1932, he had said:

> "But if these vital conditions of the Pact are not carried out by caste-Hindus, could I possibly live to face god and man? I ventured even to tell Dr.Ambedkar, Rao Bahadur M.C. Raja and other friends belonging to the suppressed group that they should regard me as a hostage for the due fulfilment by caste-Hindus of the conditions of the Pact" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 9, p. 124).

What did this person who 'showered' love on Untouchables do in the case of this Bill? We may see it in Ambedkar's narration.

> "Did he resent this betrayal by Mr. Rajagopalachari...? One would naturally expect Mr. Gandhi to denounce this betrayal... Quite the contrary. Instead of blaming Mr. Rajagopalachari, he blamed Mr. Ranga Iyer for his violent denunciation of the Congress Party for withdrawing its support to the Bill" (Vol. 9, p. 125).

Gandhi said:

> "The ill-fated temple entry Bill deserved a more decent burial... there was hardly any occasion for the anger into which he [Ranga Iyer] allowed himself to be betrayed or the displeasure which he expressed towards congressmen... It was not a measure in which Congress Hindus were more interested than the other Hindus" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 9, p. 125).

Thus, ironically, Gandhi taught morals to Ranga Iyer.

This great lover of truth, who said, 'could I show my face to the god if this reform does not pass through', has abandoned the Bill without the least feeling and found fault with those who felt upset over its defeat. This he did with the over confidence that he could carry on the drama of the Bill after elections!

In fact, it happened exactly the same way! A Congress person named M.C. Raja did introduce afresh a Bill on temple entry in the Madras legislature in 1937. (See Vol. 5, pp. 356-62).

This Raja was himself an untouchable. He was once a staunch opponent of the Congress. But he became annoyed with the British, he had become the follower of Gandhi and made Gandhi happy by opposing the demand for separate electorates because the British government invited

Srinivasan and not Raja to the Round Table Conference. In his early days in the Congress, however, he sought clarification from Gandhi regarding 'what should be the stand of Untouchables who join the Congress with reference to the party discipline?' Gandhi said that the Untouchables were free to act in accordance with the interests of their caste and party discipline would not apply in that matter. Since then Raja had become a devotee of Gandhi.

Now, Gandhi gave his consent to the Temple Entry Bill which Rajagopalachari himself drafted and which Raja introduced. In July 1938, the Bill came up for discussion in the Madras legislature. Rajagopalachari once again began his campaign of opposition to the Bill. He issued a whip instructing all the representatives of Untouchables in the Congress party to oppose the Bill. Ambedkar does not explain as to why Rajagopalachary did this. They abandoned the Bill when Ranga Iyer introduced it because of the fear of losing votes of Hindus. What exactly happened when Raja introduced the Bill? Why did Rajagopalachari draft the Bill and opposed it himself? I have not found these details in Ambedkar.

Now, Rajagopalachari issued the whip stating that the legislators belonging to the untouchable communities in the Congress party have to oppose the Bill and opposing the Bill is observing party discipline. But Gandhi said earlier that Untouchables need not observe party discipline contrary to their caste interests. But now it is another order!

The Bill is for the temple entry of Untouchables! But the Untouchables themselves must oppose it! In such a situation, what should the untouchable legislators do? But they, too, were apparently satisfied with the singular good fortune of sitting in the legislature. They voted against the Bill.

Ambedkar says about this incident:

> "It was a dilemma for the Untouchable members of the Madras Legislature. But they had no choice. The whip was applied and they in a body voted against the measure. The representatives of the Untouchables were supposed to be the watch-dogs of the Untouchables. But by reason of having joined the Congress they are muzzled dogs. Far from biting they are not even able to bark. This loss of freedom of speech and action by these Untouchable members is entirely due to their having joined the Congress and subjected themselves to the discipline of the Congress" (Vol. 5, p. 345).

Raja wrote a detailed letter to Gandhi regarding the betrayal by Rajagopalachari.

> "This Bill had your blessing. It was drafted by Mr. Rajagopalachariar himself and approved by you. At a previous session of the Assembly

I introduced the Bill with the consent of Mr. Rajagopalachariar, who promised his full support to the measure. When I suggested that the Bill might be introduced by him as a Government measure, he wanted me to introduce it. When I met him last, on the 12th July 1938 and informed him that I was giving notice of a motion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee he did not object. I do not know what happened in the meantime but two days before my motion for referring the Bill to the Select Committee came up before the house, Mr. Rajagopalachariar sent for me and quietly asked me to withdraw the Bill, which I refused to do. When in due course, I moved for the consideration of the Bill, Mr. Rajagopalachariar stood up and opposed the Bill and requested me to withdraw it, saying that he would introduce a Temple Entry Bill on the same lines, only for Malabar and not for other Districts" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, p. 359).

Raja also wrote that Malabar was the most difficult region in which to implement temple entry; that the Bill would anyhow face defeat there. That is why Rajagopalachariar tactically had chosen that district (Vol. 5, p. 34).

Although Raja was now upset so much, he was the one who, at the time when all the Untouchables were demanding special electorates, took Gandhi's side and declared:

"I contend that this privilege we have already enjoyed under the Montford reforms which have enabled us to get representation in numerous local bodies and in legislatures both provincial and central....we feel that the moral conscience of the Hindus has been roused to the extent that our salvation lies in bringing about a change from within the main body of Hindu society and not segregating ourselves from them" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, pp. 357-8).

Just as this untouchable man then opposed the rights of Untouchables, the untouchable legislators have now opposed the temple entry. Both are the same. However, Raja's letter indicates that he has realized the issue at this stage to some extent.

Raja further wrote to Gandhi:

"The effect of Mr. Rajagopalachariar's speech was to defeat my motion with my own community men...I am forced to think that our entering the joint electorate with the caste Hindus under the leadership of the Congress, far from helping us, has enabled the Congress, led by Caste Hindu leaders to destroy our independence and to use us to cut our own throats... You have more than once said that temple entry is of the very essence of the removal of Untouchability... If we are not free to enter into Hindu Temples, we are no Hindus, and if we are not Hindus why should we be in a joint electorate with them? Is it for swelling their

numbers as against Muslims and other communities?... the rejection of the Temple Entry Bill is a gross betrayal of the Depressed Classes by the Congress government in Madras" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, pp.359-61).

Thus, Raja wrote to Gandhi again and again. Gandhi, however, replied only twice.

1st reply: "Dear friend, ...I wish you would trust C. Rajagopalachariar to do his best. He should be allowed to do the thing in his own way. If you cannot trust, naturally you will take the course which commends itself to you. All I know is that Harijans have no better friend than him" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 5, p. 360).

2nd reply: "Your last letter shows that you are in the wrong... he (Rajaji) is as firm on Untouchability as I am myself. I must, therefore, trust his judgment as to how to do the thing... This temple entry question is a mighty religious reform. I would like you to apply your religious mind to it. If you will, you will give your whole hearted support to Rajaji and make his move a thorough success" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol.5, p.362).

These are the replies received from Gandhi.

If Rajagopalachari opposed the Bill, would he do it without consulting Gandhi? It is their joint decision. Gandhi fully supported Rajagopalachari and scolded Raja.

There are many strange things about this temple entry. In 1936, at Travancore, the Maharaja (the King) declared that he was granting temple entry to Untouchables. But he excluded the private temples of Maharani. Pannir Selvam, a legislator, questioned Rajagopalachari, the Prime Minister of Madras about this exclusion. Rajagopalachari did not answer the question. This means, it is true that some temples were not kept open for Untouchables even when it was propagated that temples were kept open for Untouchables! (Vol. 5, p. 391).

Ambedkar tells us that the Congress government made two laws for temple entry. (He does not provide dates).

"Since the new constitution came into operation two Acts have been passed in two Provinces by the Congress Governments. One in Bombay and another in Madras. There is no substance in the Acts. They do not declare the Temples to be open. They permit the Trustees of the Temples under their management if they desire and as there is nothing to compel the Trustees to do so the Acts are just scraps of paper and nothing more. But the Madras Act has a history which is somewhat puzzling. The Madras Prime Minister who got the Act passed is Mr. Rajagopalachari.

He occupies a very high place in the Congress, so high indeed that he is called Deputy Mahatma" (Vol. 5, p. 389).

This means there will be 'Deputy Mahatmas' behind the 'Mahatmas'!

3) More on 'Mahatma'!

Gandhi has lot of reverence for the 'caste system'. According to him, it has many virtues. For many years until he became old, he was not in a position to tolerate inter-caste dining either. He expressed his views on castes in the paper *Navajeevan* in 1922:

> "I believe that if Hindu Society has been able to stand it is because it is founded on the caste system.... Different castes are like different sections of military division. Each division is working for the good of the whole... A community which can create the caste system must be said to possess unique power of organization... I believe that interdining or intermarriage are not necessary for promoting national unity" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 9, p. 275-6)

According to Gandhi, interdining of different castes is also unnecessary. He says:

> "That dining together creates friendship is contrary to experience. If this was true there would have been no war in Europe.... Taking food is as dirty an act as answering call of nature. The only difference is that after answering call of nature we get peace while after eating food we get discomfort. Just as we perform the act of answering the call of nature in seclusion so also the act of taking food must also be done in seclusion" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol. 9, p. 276).

This is, then, the reason to oppose interdining between castes. If we follow the principle that the act of taking food must also be done in seclusion, then two persons of the same caste should not eat together either. Gandhi's argument proves the fact that a person prattles as he likes when there is no one to question him.

Glorifying the caste system and hereditary occupations, Gandhi finally says,

> "I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the caste system... The best remedy is that small castes should fuse themselves into one big caste. There should be four such big castes so that we may reproduce the old system of four Varnas" (as cited in Ambedkar, Vol .9, p.276-7).

According to Gandhi, the Varna system, that consists of only four divisions and that perpetuates the caste occupations, is superior to the increasing numbers of castes unendingly. Here it is necessary to recall an

aspect of Ambedkar's views. Ambedkar too did the job of glorifying the four Varnas. His entire theory of 'origin of castes' is solely based on his assumption that the four Varnas are superior. But if Gandhi or Arya Samajists or others make the same assumption, Ambedkar would immediately contradict it by saying, "what is great in four Varnas?". We have seen before Ambedkar's characterization of four Varnas as follows: "If the idea of caste is a pernicious idea it is entirely because of the viciousness of the idea of Varna". This he said while responding to Gandhi. As Gandhi praised the four Varnas, Ambedkar contradicted Gandhi and says thus:

> "That Mr. Gandhi changed over from the caste system to the Varna system does not make the slightest difference to the charge that Gandhism is opposed to democracy. In the first place, the idea of *Varna* is the parent of the idea of *caste*. If the idea of caste is a pernicious idea it is entirely because of the viciousness of the idea of *Varna*" (Vol. 9, p. 289).

Here Ambedkar does not at all remember that he had himself glorified the four Varnas. Neither Gandhi nor Arya Samajists have self-contradictory views on the four Varnas. They have a uniform view that 'Varnas are good'. For Ambedkar, however, Varnas are good at one time and bad at another! Owing to such arguments, Ambedkar has to face criticism.

(1) Once again on Gandhi

Gandhi goes into ecstasy when he hears teachings concerning the four Varnas. Just as Varna system laid down that Shudras should not acquire property, Gandhi too emphasizes the same thing:

> "The Shudra who only serves (the higher caste) as a matter of religious duty, and who will never own any property, who indeed has not even the ambition to own anything, is deserving of thousand obeisance... The very Gods will shower down flowers on him" (Vol.9, p. 291).

Owning property or anything is 'ambition'! These words are not meant to all, only for Shudras! The upper castes could own property! It is not ambition in case of propertied class. It is, however, 'ambition' if Shudras own property. They must serve the higher caste as a matter of religious duty! If they do so, Gods will shower flowers on them! This is the path which Mr. Gandhi showed to Shudras with great love!

See how mean is Gandhi's attempt to delude Untouchables who live on scavenging work compared to his attempt to delude Shudras!

> "I do not want to attain *Moksha*. I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order

that I may endeavor to free myself and them from that miserable condition. I, therefore, prayed that if I should be born again, I should do so not as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra, but as an Atishudra... I love scavenging. In my Ashram, an eighteen year old Brahmin lad is doing the scavenger's work in order to teach the Ashram scavenger cleanliness. The lad is no reformer. He was born and bred in orthodoxy... But he felt that his accomplishments were incomplete until he had become also a perfect sweeper, and that, if he wanted the Ashram sweeper to do his work well, he must do it himself and set an example," said Gandhi about the Brahmin lad. Later addressing the scavenging workers, he said, "You should realize that you are cleaning Hindu society" (Vol. 9, p. 292).

Hindus should clean Hindu society; why should non-Hindus clean it? Why should a single caste carry the responsibility of cleaning the urine and faeces of all persons in society? Didn't this Mahatma (the great soul) find any injustice in it? The Brahmin lad is doing the scavenger's work in order to allow the Ashram sweeper to do his work 'well', says Gandhi. He did not feel ashamed to say all this. That Brahmin lad would stop that work after few days. But the scavengers would have to do the same job throughout their lives, indeed for endless generations until Mahatma Gandhi is reborn as a scavenger and uplift all the scavengers! Why should Gandhi wait until he is reborn in order to uplift Untouchables? If he waits until then, who knows whether he may be reborn as the best Brahmin because of his many pious acts in this life? Therefore, why should he not start immediately in the present life itself the activity of uplifting Untouchables?

(2) Mr. Gandhi's 'Harijan Sevak Sangh'

In December 1932, Mr. Gandhi started an association called the Servants of Untouchables Society and changed its name later to Harijan Sevak Sangh. The devotees of Vishnu liked the name Harijan but the devotees of Shiva did not like it because 'Hari' means Vishnu, whereas 'Hara' means Shiva! The devotees of Shiva were afraid that 'Hari' would become stronger if Untouchables are known as 'Hari's people' (Harijans).So they joined the camp of Hari. (Both the Gods would have protected Untouchables if they had the name 'Hari-Har-jan'). Mr. Gandhi, consoling the devotees of Shiva, explained that the term 'Harijans' mean 'children of god', that the term does not refer to the name of a particular god. If Harijans are the children of the 'God', whose children are those remaining people? This he did not clarify.

Regarding the term 'Harijans' Ambedkar says as follows:

"The Untouchables simply detest the name Harijan. Various grounds of

objection are urged against the name. In the first place it has not bettered their position. It has not elevated them in the eyes of the Hindus. The new name has become completely identified with the subject matter of the old. Everybody knows that Harijans are simply no other than the old Untouchables. The new name provides no escape to the Untouchables from the curse of Untouchability. With the new name they are damned as much as they were with the old. Secondly the Untouchables say that they prefer to be called Untouchables. They argue that it is better that the wrong should be called by its known name. It is better for the patient to know what he is suffering from. It is better for the wrong doer that the wrong is there still to be redressed. Any concealment will give a false sense of both as to existing facts. The new name in so far as it is a concealment is fraud upon the Untouchables and a false absolution to the Hindus... How great is the resentment of the Untouchables against this new name can be seen from the fact that whole body of the representatives of the Untouchables in the Bombay Legislative Assembly walked out of the House in protest when the Congress Government introduced a measure giving to the name Harijan the sanction of law... That it was forced upon the Untouchables and that it has done no good are however facts which cannot be disputed" (Vol. 5, p. 363-4).

In this context while stating that Untouchables do not like the term 'Harijans', Ambedkar, hastily added:

> "The more manly among the Untouchables resent the degrading implications of this new name" (p. 364).

Does it not mean that women might accept the degrading implications of the new name? This would amount to degrading untouchable women. But, except at one or two places, this kind of trend does not appear in the writings of Ambedkar. We find, instead, a careful attitude toward women on many occasions. But expressions like 'the more manly' relate to a culture that degrades women. One must abandon such language as this.

Well, what are the objectives of the Harijan Sevak Sangh which Gandhi started? It is merely to make separate arrangements for Untouchables: separate wells, separate schools, separate hospitals, everything separate! There would be some provision of scholarships for the children of Untouchables who are favourable to the Congress party. The second objective is to preach peacefully among Hindus that they should not practice Untouchability. Gandhi, who says that he cannot tolerate a division among the Hindus, began his service of Untouchables with these separate arrangements. This Sangh did not even do the job of encouraging intercaste dining. Instead, it declared bluntly that it was not their job: "Social reforms like the abolition of the caste system and interdining are

kept outside the scope of the league" (Vol. 9, p. 141). Which means, this league will not even attempt to shake the foundations of Untouchability!

When they started this league (when they did not yet change its name as 'Harijan Sevak Sangh'), they took into the executive three Untouchables: Ambedkar, M.C.Raja and R. Srinivasan.

Ambedkar wrote a long letter to Thakkar, the secretary of the League, giving his suggestions with regard to the activities of the League. His suggestions included the following: The League should tell the Untouchables that they too, like Hindus, have the right to use all the public amenities and that they should boldly use them. This may even lead to bloodshed. Even if that happens, there is no other way in which we can achieve things. The League should assist Untouchables in court cases. It should teach Hindus that they should not practice Untouchability and should give Untouchables opportunity while engaging domestic workers and appointing employees in their businesses. Hindu doctors should treat Untouchables without any hesitation. The League should depend on the volunteers who work for the work of social reform. The only thing that can hold touchables and Untouchables together is love. Outside the family, justice alone can open the possibility of love and the League should see that the touchables do justice to Untouchables (Vol. 9, pp. 135-40). Thus Ambedkar expressed his views in that letter.

But neither Gandhi nor Thakkar relished these views. They did not even reply to Ambedkar's letter. Ambedkar resigned from the League as he thought that he could achieve little by continuing in the League when they did not care for his proposals. The other two Untouchable members also subsequently left the League.

The day after Gandhi ended his fast in Yerawada jail, on September 25, 1932 the Congress party held a meeting in Bombay on Untouchability. In that meeting, when leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya were lecturing to the effect that it was necessary to mobilize a large fund for driving out the evil of untouchablity, one person from the audience remarked that no money was necessary to eliminate Untouchability, it was enough if Hindu men and women in that meeting receive Untouchables in their homes (Vol. 9, p. 132)!

Not a single paisa is required for the project in which Hindu men and women are to give up the practice of Untouchability. But, participants in the meeting did not like such a good suggestion. The leaders didn't like the suggestion at all! They did not care for the suggestion. They could have declared in the meeting thus, "Yes, let us receive Untouchables in our houses from today onwards". But they did not at all respond to the suggestion.

The leaders who started the League to fight against Untouchability surely ought to have laid down a condition that those desirous of membership in the League should not practice Untouchability. But there is no condition whatever in that League because all leaders have to first fulfil such a condition. How difficult it is to receive Untouchables into their houses! The devil of Untouchability must disappear without Hindus changing at all! Mobilization of a huge fund and establishing separate wells and separate schools would, apparently, themselves constitute a struggle against Untouchability!

There were no Untouchables in the League formed to uplift Untouchables. When some Untouchables questioned Gandhi about it, Gandhi gave different answers: This is a League for Untouchables and not of Untouchables; as Hindus are committing sin by practising Untouchability, Hindus alone have to work for its elimination; as Hindus alone are giving donations to this League and not Untouchables, Untouchables do not have the right to be in this League, and so on.

Will it do good or harm if Untouchables are present in a League which functions for the benefit of Untouchables? What is the disadvantage of Untouchables' presence in the League?

As Hindus are committing this sin, they alone have to work in this League, says Gandhi, doesn't he? But note carefully—it is not Hindu volunteers with a sense of social reform who carried out the activities of the League. It is Hindu employees who are doing that, as a salaried job!

Well, coming to 'donations', Untouchables too would definitely give whatever donations they could to the League if one were to ask them. But, as one would have to admit Untouchables as members in the League if they gave donations, Gandhi did not like the idea. If Untouchables were present in the League they might say that the League should fight with Hindus vigorously, might they not? Hence Gandhi did not like the idea of admitting Untouchables as members.

Hindus do not allow Untouchables to make any attempt to make use of Government Acts. Yet Gandhi is not angry with the Hindus. It is not Gandhi's method to encourage Untouchables to fight against Hindus. Gandhi's path is to appease and appeal to Hindus always thus: Why don't you change a little? Only if you like it? Change a little? Only if you like it! Otherwise you need not at all change! Why don't you allow Untouchable children to come to the schools? Only do this much, you need not do more than this! It is Gandhi's fear that Hindus might turn against the Congress party if he instructs them in stronger terms! It is his fear that Untouchables might turn against the Congress if he said anything at all to them! He has to remain on amicable terms with all groups if he has to hold his

leadership over them. That was his great political tactic! In other words, Gandhi's aim was to play the 'drama of service to Untouchables' without creating any difficulty for Hindus.

Kavitha incident: Some Untouchables in Kavitha village of Ahmedabad district joined their children in the school. On August 8, 1935 there was an Act allowing the children of the Untouchables to join the Government School. Since then the sufferings of Untouchables in that village increased. Hindus (including their women) started attacking their huts. They routed their huts, destroyed household articles, beat the inmates, poured kerosene oil in their wells, boycotted them and stopped selling goods to them. These kinds of atrocities went for days together. All this is because Untouchables joined their children in the school with the confidence that there was an Act of government allowing them to do so (vol. 5, pp. 41-42). Not withstanding these long drawn out sufferings, the Untouchables approached the Harijan Sevak Sangh, established by Gandhi, enumerated all their sufferings, and informed them of their intention to leave that village.

This information reached Gandhi. Mahatma felt very happy over the decision of Untouchables. He advised them to go ahead with their plan. He said:

> "There is no help like self-help. God helps those who help themselves. If the Harijans concerned will carry out their reported resolve to wipe the dust of Kavitha off their feet, they will not only be happy themselves but they will pave the way for others who may be similarly treated. If people migrate in search of employment how much more should they do so in search of self-respect? I hope that well-wishers of Harijans will help these poor families to vacate inhospitable Kavitha" (Vol. 9, pp.265-6).

Will there not be Hindus in the village to which the Untouchables migrate? Would they allow their children to join the schools? Did Gandhi not know that the same thing would happen there too? He knew every thing well, then shouldn't he tell the same thing? Shouldn't he give them courage thus, "Don't go anywhere! The same situation exists every where. You must continue wherever you are and fight. File cases against those who are torturing you! Stand united! The Harijan Sevak Sangh will assist you!"

But it was not Gandhi's objective to prepare Untouchables to conduct such a rebellion. Untouchables, without engaging in conflict, should depend on the kindness and mercy of Hindus and live obediently. They must keep emigrating from places where they suffer at the hands of Hindus. This was Gandhi's teaching of 'self-respect'!

But the Untouchables did not like this teaching. They gave up the idea of leaving Kavitha. They remained in the same village and filed cases against Hindus. Mr Vallabhai Patel, a licutenant of Gandhi, entered the scene and visited the village. This gentleman brought pressure on the Untouchables and made them withdraw the cases filed against Hindus. This is the wonderful 'service' which the Harijan Sevak Sangh performed for the 'Harijans' (Vol.5, pp.41-42, Vol.9, pp:264-6).

Khare Episode: In 1938, there was crisis in the central provinces where there was a Congress ministry. Prime Minister Khare asked his old cabinet to resign and formed a new cabinet and took an untouchable called Agni Bhoj as a minister. With this, trouble began for Khare. The Congress party removed Khare from his Prime ministership on the ground that he did not consult the Congress parliamentary party on this issue and it was a breach of party discipline. The real charge against Khare was that he appointed an untouchable as a minister. Though Agni Bhoj was an untouchable, he was not a raw illiterate. He was a graduate, an orator and a strong party-man. Yet Gandhi could not tolerate making an untouchable a minister. Khare had been telling openly that Gandhi took him to task for including a Harijan in his cabinet implying that why he chose an untouchable fellow as minister?" Ambedkar asked Khare to put in writing what Gandhi had said to him. Khare's information is as follows:

> "Mahatmaji took me to task for including a Harijan in my second cabinet. I retorted by saying that it was a Congress programme of uplift of Harijans for which Mahatmaji fasted unto death and that I did what I could in furtherance of that programme when opportunity offered itself and I think i have done nothing wrong in doing so. Thereupon Mahatmaji charged me of doing this for my selfish ambition. I repudiated this charge saying that any selfish motive is disproved by my resignation. Then Mahatmaji said that by my action I have thrown an apple of discord among the members of that simple community and have rendered disservice to the Congress cause by throwing this temptation in their way" (Vol. 5, p.377).

Dr. Khare also said that Mr. Gandhi told him that it was wrong on his part to have raised such aspirations and ambitions in the Untouchables and it was such an act of bad judgment that he would never forgive him. This statement was repeatedly made by Dr. Khare from platforms. Mr. Gandhi has never contradicted it (Vol. 9, p. 98).

We can believe what Khare said to be true because Agni Bhoj was not present in the new cabinet that formed after the resignation of Khare. They have not taken him as minister again.

> "A crowd of Untouchables went to Shegaon to Mr. Gandhi for an explanation. Anticipating this Mr. Gandhi had started observing silence,

so that no explanation could be had. Then the Untouchables started Satyagraha against Mr. Gandhi for not including an Untouchable in the Central Provinces Congress Cabinet. To escape that embarrassment Mr. Gandhi left Shegaon and went on a tour to the North Western Frontier Provinces for teaching non-violence to the Pathans" (Vol. 5, p. 378).

Many Untouchables entered the Assembly through the Congress party. But none of them was ever made a minister. In 1942, an untouchable of the Congress party put five questions to Gandhi. One of those questions is:

"Will you advise the Congress and the leaders of the various majority parties in the legislatures in the provinces to nominate the Cabinet members from among the Scheduled Caste legislators who enjoy the confidence of the majority of Scheduled Caste members?" Gandhi's reply: "I cannot. The principle is dangerous. Protection of its neglected classes should not be carried to an extent which will harm them and harm the country. A cabinet minister should be a topmost man commanding universal confidence. A person after he has secured a seat in an elected body should depend upon his intrinsic merit and popularity to secure coveted positions" (Vol. 9, p. 99).

This principle applies only to Untouchables and not Hindus! For them, it is enough if they get elected to Assembly. They can become ministers. They possess merit and reputation by birth! An Untouchable, however educated he may be, does not possess those qualities. This is Gandhi's principle!

The essence of what Ambedkar said on the question of merit is this: true, 'competence' is necessary to carry out responsibilities. No one will deny this point. But one has to select competent people from among the available people. A person who becomes a minister is the people's representative. That representative will be as intelligent as those people. How can a representative, who comes from the people, possess superior intelligence to the people of the nation? So, opportunities be given to those who are available (Vol. 9, p. 415).

Ambedkar's charge was that 'it was a stage of fighting against the British. Indians would be able to achieve independence if they were united as much as possible. The attempt to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity is for that purpose only. The Congress party, however, did not wish to achieve unity with Untouchables even as a political tactic. All the incidents cited here prove this fact.

Had Ambedkar not written all these things on Gandhi, people would still be believing Gandhi's words only.

We notice a change in Gandhi by 1936. He was saying that he would agree to interdining and intercast marriages. In the *Harijan* of August 15, 1936, he said:

> "...if *Shastras* support the existing Untouchability I should cease to call myself or remain a Hindu since I have no scruples about interdining or intermarriage" (Vol. 1, p. 85).

One would need to examine, carefully, however, whether this is a new development or merely a new political tactic. If you want to know how much Gandhi is really concerned with the eradication of Untouchability, read the 5th and 9th volumes of Ambedkar! There are dozens of instructive incidents. Looking at the Mahatma's attitude, you will be extremely astonished.

In Volume 9 (pp. 251-4) of Ambedkar, there are 14 questions which Ambedkar asked about Gandhi. All of them are instances that expose the 'sincerity' of Gandhi.

In many contexts, Ambedkar, unhesitatingly and carelessly, criticises Gandhi and Gandhism with such expressions as: 'man with the greatest cunning', 'ambitious politician', 'purile and insincere', 'a worse person', 'elf', 'overdone the trick', 'stupid and revolting', 'a stab in the back', 'plot against Untouchables', 'treachery', 'illusory', and so on. (Vol. 9, pp: 57, 259, 268, 286, 287, 290, 295; Vol. 5, pp: 320, 322, 354, 376). All this criticism is apt in the respective contexts. All this criticism makes us feel happy if we understand what is fair and what is unfair. We don't know how many secrets are hidden concerning Mahatmas and Deputy Mahatmas!

10 THE CONDITION OF UNTOUCHABLES

Contrary to the path which 'Swamis' like Vivekananda and 'Mahatmas' like Gandhi shown to the untouchable castes, the fight that Ambedkar started became a 'ray of hope' for the Untouchables.

Although Ambedkar discussed all aspects of the caste system, the main theme is eradication of untouchability. According to Ambedkar 'Depressed Classes' (Dalits) are 'Untouchables' (Vol. 2, p. 671).

Untouchables face the problem of untouchability in addition to all other kinds of problems which all the lower castes face. It is the Untouchables who experience more sufferings and more insults than the rest of the lower castes.

What is the economic condition of these Untouchables? What is their means of livelihood? How have they been living for generations? Ambedkar described these matters on many occasions. Though the economic condition of Untouchables is similar to that of other lower castes in some contexts, it is not the same in all the contexts. For example, the problem of 'landlessness' is, by and large, similar in the castes of both Untouchables as well as other lower castes. But the legal restriction that 'one should not buy land' is imposed on Untouchables at least in certain areas whereas the same restriction is not imposed on other lower castes. Similarly, it is not possible for Untouchables to engage in certain kinds of trade. People of other castes refuse to buy milk, curds, vegetables, etc., from Untouchables. Other lower castes do not face quite the same problem. Similarly, Untouchables alone do the work of scavenging and disposal of dead animals. Owing to these kinds of differences, the economic condition of Untouchables is more intolerable than that of other lower castes. Unless we understand this basic fact, we cannot understand the specific condition of the Untouchables.

Let us see the information that Ambedkar gives with regard to the economic condition of Untouchables:

> "How do the Untouchables live? How do they earn their living? Without a knowledge of the ways of earning a livelihood which are open to the Untouchables it would not be possible to have a clear idea of their place in the Hindu Society. In an agricultural country, agriculture can be the main source of living. But this source of earning a living is generally not open to the Untouchables. This is so for a variety of reasons. In the first place purchase of land is beyond their means. Secondly even if an Untouchable has the money to purchase land he has no opportunity to do so. In most parts the Hindus would resent an Untouchable coming forward to purchase land and thereby trying to become the equal of the Touchable class of Hindus. Such an act of daring on the part of an Untouchable would not only be frowned upon but might easily invite punishment. In some parts they are disabled by law from purchasing land. For instance in the Province of Punjab there is a law called the Land Alienation Act. This law specifies the communities which can purchase land and the Untouchables are excluded from the list. The result is that in most parts the Untouchables are forced to be landless labourers. As labourers they cannot demand reasonable wages. They have to work for the Hindu farmer for such wages as their masters choose to give. On this issue the Hindu farmers can combine to keep the wages to the lowest

level possible for it is to their interest to do so. On the other hand the Untouchables have no holding power. They must earn or starve. Nor have they any bargaining power. They must submit to the rate fixed or suffer violence" (Vol. 5, p. 23).

"When the agricultural season is over the Untouchables have no employment and no means of earning a living. In such seasons they subsist by cutting grass and firewood from the jungle and sell it in a nearby town. Even when it is open it depends upon the forest guard. Only if he is bribed he will let them take some grass and firewood from the Government forest.... All these sources of earning are obviously precarious and fleeting... Every village has its machinery of administration. The Untouchables of the village are hereditary menials employed in the village administration. As part of their remuneration the whole body of Untouchables get a small parcel of land assigned in the ancient past which is fixed and is never increased and which the Untouchables prefer to leave uncultivated because of its excessive fragmentations. Coupled with this is given to them the right to beg for food.... This right to beg for food from the Touchables is now the principal means of livelihood for 60 millions of Untouchables in India" (Vol. 5, p. 24).

"Let me give a few illustrations. Take the Punjab of PEPSU. The Jats dominate the whole area. The Untouchables live in subordinate dependence on them. Take Andhra—there are two or three major communities spread over the linguistic area. They are either the Reddis or the Kammas and the Kapus. They hold all the land, all the offices, all the business. The Untouchables live in subordinate dependence on them. Take Maharashtra. The Marathas are a huge majority in every village in Maharashtra. The Brahmins, the Gujars, the Kolis and the Untouchables live in subordinate co-operation" (Vol. 1, p. 134).

"Castes are so distributed that in any given area there is one caste which is major and there are others which are small and are subservient to the major caste owing to their comparative smallness and their economic dependence upon the major caste which owns most land in the village" (Vol. 1, p. 167).

"The Depressed Classes have no economic independence in most parts of the Presidency. Some cultivate the lands of the orthodox classes as their tenants at will. Others live on their earnings as farm labourers employed by the orthodox classes and the rest subsit on the food or grain given to them by the orthodox classes in lieu of service rendered to them as village servants. We have heard of numerous instances where the orthodox classes have used their economic power as a weapon against those Depressed Classes in their villages, when the latter have dared to exercise their rights, and have evicted them from their lands, and stopped

their employment and discontinued their remuneration as village servants. This boycott is often planned on such an extensive scale as to include the prevention of the Depressed Classes from using the commonly used paths and the stoppage of the necessities of life by the village Bania. According to the evidence sometimes small causes suffice for the proclamation of a social boycott against the Depressed Classes" (Vol.2, p. 531).

"... the chief weapon in the armoury of the Hindus is economic power which they possess over the poor Untouchables living in the village" (Vol. 1, p. 426).

"... the economic position of the Untouchables... is most pitiable... They are a body of landless labourers..." (Vol. 1, p. 425).

"If the Untouchables have been living on carrion it is not because they like it. They eat carrion, because there is nothing else on which they can live. This will be clear to anyone who realizes that on account of untouchability they have no way left to earn a living. All professions have been closed to them. There is no land on the produce of which they can live. There is no trade which they can engage in. Their main stay is therefore the food they collect from the villagers and the carrion which is left to them. Without carrion they would literally die of starvation" (Vol. 5, p. 256).

"... the only field of service in which there is no discrimination against the Untouchables is scavenging. There is no need for discrimination in this field because the whole of it is made over to the Untouchables and there is no competition from the Hindus. Even here discrimination steps in the matter of higher posts. All unclean work is done by the Untouchables. But all supervisory posts which carry higher salary and which do not involve contact with filth are all filled by Hindus. In this situation rights of citizenship cannot mean the rights of the Untouchables. Government of the people and for the people cannot mean Government for the Untouchables" (Vol. 5, pp. 108-9).

"If the Untouchables skin and carry the dead animals of the Hindus, it is because the Untouchables have no choice. They are forced to do it. They would be penalized if they refused to do it. The penalty is legal. In some provinces the refusal to do this dirty work is a breach of contract. In other provinces it is a criminal offence involving fine... In Provinces like the United Provinces, refusal to do scavenging by sweeper is made an offence... Should a sweeper who has a customary right to do the house-scavenging of a house of building... fail to perform such scavenging in a proper way, the occupier of the house or building or the board may complain to a Magistrate" (Vol. 5, pp. 256-7).

"The Hindu Social Order is based upon a division of labour which

reserves for the Hindus clean and respectable jobs and assigns to the Untouchables dirty and mean jobs and thereby clothes the Hindus with dignity and heaps ignominy upon the Untouchables" (Vol. 5, p. 258).

"The population in the village is divided into two sections—(1)Touchables and (2) Untouchables... Economically, the Touchables form a strong and powerful community, while the Untouchables are a poor and a dependent community. Socially, the Touchables occupy the position of a ruling race, while the Untouchables occupy the position of a subject race of hereditary bondsmen" (Vol. 5, pp.20-21).

Now let us see how touchables force Untouchables to do unclean jobs free of remuneration (Vol. 5, pp: 55-61):

Hindus behave as if Untouchables are born to serve them. They believe that they can forcibly make Untouchables serve them. They call such forced and free labour 'Begar'.

A report in the paper 'Jeevan': On November 29, 1938 Brahmins, Thakurs and Jats subjected Jatavs to torture because they refused to do Begar. Recently, Thakurs called Jatavs when a bull died. Jatavs, then, told Thakurs that they would dispose of the dead bull only if they pay remuneration. Hindus became furious and it led to a big fight.

A report again in 'Jeevan' in February 1939: When Jats, of Abhaypur in the Kidwali taluk of Agra district, ask poor people belonging to the scheduled castes to do forced labour (Begar), the poor Untouchables used to ask 'wage' and the Jats used to beat them.

A report in 'Savadhan', dated June 3, 1945: As Mehraji Kori, a scheduled caste woman refused to do Begar (forced free labour), three police constables went to her house in the night, took her to police station and violated her modesty. They filled charcoal and pieces of paper in her private part and put their private organs in her mouth. Her clothes were torn and saturated with blood. The following day her mother was forced to do begar work for the whole day and then both of them were left off in the night.

A report in 'Hindusthan Times" of November 15, 1945: Rajputs of Dukheri village in Ambala district went in groups and attacked Harijans who refused Begari. They killed two Harijans in this connection.

Ambedkar's evidence before the Simon Commission:

"The depressed classes have been dubbed to be unfit for association because of certain unclean habits. That is the allegation of the upper classes. That is to say, they eat the meat of the dead animals and they are not clean, and so on... [But] in the Colaba and Ratnagiri districts

the whole of the Mahar population have given up the eating of the meat of dead animals, but the tyranny and social oppression that is going on against them is simply unspeakable; there is a complete economic and social boycott. The lands they had been cultivating for years past have been taken away from them by their caste-Hindu landlords. Every sort of pressure, social and economic, has been brought to bear upon the depressed classes in order to compel them to resume their dirty habits" (Vol. 2, p. 484).

What does all this information indicate?

It shows two kinds of conditions:

(1) 'Poverty' due to lack of means of production.

(2) 'Untouchability' due to 'division of labour' in the form of 'castes'.

These conditions are interlinked with each other. Yet we have to understand them separately as far as possible.

(1) Poverty: Untouchables do not own either land or other means of production. Even if they have, it is negligible. This situation applies to the other lower castes and some sections in the upper castes as well. Large part of the means of production will be under the control of upper castes and this is precisely the main weapon of those castes.

(2) Untouchability: The jobs of Untouchables include not only agriculture-related jobs but also sweeping of the streets, scavenging, burial of dead animals, toilet cleaning and such other jobs involving cleaning of dirt. These jobs are bottommost manual labours that are necessary for all people in society. Doing agriculture-related jobs apply not only to the Untouchables but also the Shudra population. But, doing unclean jobs is specific to Untouchables only. Though it is not possible to say that untouchability is due to unclean jobs, it is completely possible to say that 'Untouchables alone do unclean jobs'. This means, we find poverty and unclean jobs in the case of Untouchables. What could be the solution to these problems?

Since 'poverty' arises due to exploitation of labour, elimination of exploitation of labour will be the solution. This means, every individual in society must perform labour. There must not be a class that does not perform labour. Since performance of unclean jobs is specific to Untouchables, the solution will be elimination of wage system and the division of labour formed due to the relations of exploitation. This means performance of unclean jobs should not be limited to only one section. Every person should do those jobs as part of his/her duties. Thus, we must change the old division of labour.

If we consider other lower castes, we find the same problems in their case as well, namely, (1) poverty and (2) confinement to manual labour only. Poverty is the problem connected with exploitation of labour. Confining to manual labour is the problem of old division of labour. We, therefore, find the same solution here as well.

The economic name of the means of production is 'property'. This includes both land and other resources.

Property, essentially, is of two types. (1) Property based on one's own labour and (2) Property based on exploitation.

(1) Property based on one's own labour: Let us suppose that a family has 4 acres of agricultural land. Crops do not grow on their own just because there is land. Many kinds of labour have to be performed for that. Let us suppose that men and women in a given family do various kinds of labour for cultivating the land, sell some portion of the crop, buy other necessities of life from others and lead their life like this. This means, the members of this family are living on their own labour. Here, there is no scope of engaging others as 'labourers'. Which means, there won't be a relationship of 'master and labourer' here. If this family owns 100 acres of land, it is not possible for the family members to cultivate the entire land by means of their own labour. In other words, either an individual or a family should possess only minimum number of means of production that makes it possible for them to do labour and live on their own labour. An individual would not live in 'poverty' if some portion of his labour does not go to others. Similarly, that person will not possess 'riches' if some portion of others' labour does not come to him. Which means, there will be neither poverty nor riches under a system where each person lives on his/her own labour. It is a situation where we don't find either riches or poverty. In such a situation, life will be natural because all the necessities of life are fulfilled and there will be neither shortage nor excess of anything. If we assume that all families live like this, none is a master or labourer to others and all human beings live in 'equal' relations of labour. Such society in which every person/family is separate is the 'society of individual producers'. This is a 'system of property of individual producers'.

If all these individuals merge their individual properties and perform labour as before, then it will be a society of 'associated producers.' In other words, it is a system of property of associated producers.

Since all individuals perform labour—either in the system of property of individual producers or the system of property of associated producers—there will not be exploitation of labour. No individual will live

in poverty. There will not be unequal labour relations of a master and labourers.

(3) Property based on exploitation of labour: This is totally opposite of the first mentioned system. To understand this, it is enough if we understand the first mentioned system in an inverted manner. In this system of property, a small minority of persons owns land and other means of production as private property. The large majority of persons does not possess them. The means of production do not produce things on their own and give to their owners. Necessities of life are produced only if many kinds of labour are performed by using the means of production. But in this system of property, those who own means of production do not perform any labour. They become masters and engage those who do not own means of production as labourers. It is obvious what happens then. A large portion of the labour of labourers daily goes to the class of masters. This is how that class lives. It is nothing but exploitation of labour. This takes place under different labels: property in 'land' gets 'rent', 'property' in 'capital' gets 'interest' and 'profit'. The entire secret of exploitation is embedded in three kinds of sources of income: rents, interest and profits. These sources of income are not related to one's own labour. Under this system of property, poverty for the entire labouring class and riches for the entire master's class constitute the living conditions.

This property exists either in the form of 'property of slave masters' or 'property of capitalists' or with the same character under some other name. Whatever be the form, essence is the same. When we speak of 'private property', it is important to make a distinction whether it is a property based on 'one's own labour' or 'exploitation'.

If we leave out the primitive times in the history of human society, the history of the entire subsequent period till today simply demonstrates different forms of relations of exploitation.

If we consider the 'caste system', the Untouchables and Shudras had been the labourers who served the upper castes. The labour which these sections perform is wholly manual. While a certain section in the upper castes do not perform any labour, certain other sections perform mental labour. The lower castes do not have opportunities to perform mental labour.

These are the conditions. We have to classify these conditions into the problem of 'poverty' and the problem of 'caste distinctions'.

The solution for the problem of 'poverty' is abolition of 'exploitation of labour'. In other words, every human being has to perform labour. That is, abolition of system of property based on exploitation.

The solution for the problem of 'caste distinction' lies in changing the exploitative division of labour. Which means, the division of labour must be changed in such a way that every individual does perform certain kinds of mental labour and certain kinds of manual labour (including unclean jobs). Superstructural changes like intercaste marriages are also part of this change.

Ambedkar had discussed all such problems as eradication of untouchability, annihilation of castes and eradication of poverty. Further, he included 'religion' as one of the goals of human society. We have to examine all these issues as we proceed further.

Any struggle begins in order to get rid of immediate sufferings; that is to get temporary relief. No struggle solves fundamental problems in the very first step. Ambedkar's struggle too, very naturally, begins in order to get relief from the violence of untouchability. We will first see the demands of Untouchables and some incidents relating to their movement.

11 SOME 'DALIT' MOVEMENTS

The leaders of Untouchables were of the opinion that Untouchable castes alone be considered as Depressed Classes. But, there are objections among the Depressed Classes with reference to the label 'Depressed Classes' (hereafter 'Dalits'). The objection is that the name is 'degrading' and 'contemptuous'. But Untouchability is in fact 'degrading'. This means, the label—which indicates the degraded situations as degraded one—is able to express the real condition of Untouchables. In this sense, the label is a correct one.

As there were some objections over the name, Ambedkar suggested other names instead of Depressed Classes, namely, Non-caste Hindus, Protest Hindus or Non-conformist Hindus (Vol. 9, p. 306).

Concerning the movements of Dalits, Ambedkar informs:

> "The movement of the Untouchables against the injustice of the Hindu Social Order has a long history behind it, especially in Maharashtra" (Vol.5, p. 247).

He narrated the history of these movements briefly as follows:

> "[The British Government had declared that] all public institutions are open to all citizens including the Untouchables. The right to wear any

kind of clothes or ornaments are some of the rights which British Indian Law gives to the Untouchables al ong with the rest. To these were added the rights to the use of public utilities and institutions, such as wells, schools, buses, trams, Railways, Public offices, etc., were now put beyond the pale of doubt. But owing to the opposition of the Hindus the Untouchables cannot make any use of them. It is to meet the situation, the Untouchables decided to change the methods and to direct action to redress their wrongs. This change took place about 1920" (Vol. 5, p.247).

1) Struggle for using roads

In Vaicom in Travancore state, Hindus used to oppose the use of the road adjacent to the temple by Untouchables. "Ultimately as a result of Satyagraha, the temple compound was enlarged and the road was realigned so that there the Untouchables even if they used it were no longer within the polluting distance of the temple" (Vol. 5, p. 247). This happened in 1924. The Government made a change in such a way that Untouchables would walk at a distance from the temple. Only in this manner could the Untouchables use the road.

2) The case of the Chawdar tank

The Chawdar Tank is situated in the town of Mahad in the Kolaba district of Bombay Presidency. This was a big tank and it is not known when it was built. When the municipality of Mahad town came into existence in 1869, this tank came under the jurisdiction of the Municipality. This means that the Chawdar tank then became pubic property. Mahad was a commercial centre and headquarters of the taluk. Untouchables of the surrounding villages used to visit Mahad in connection with many transactions. But they were not allowed to use the tank. In 1923, the government made a law allowing Untouchables to use all government (public) properties. In January 1924, Mahad town municipality too declared that Untouchables could use Chawdar tank. There was held a meeting in Mahad town, with Ambedkar in the chair on March 19 & 20, 1927 to discuss the issue of using Chawdar tank by Untouchables. About 2,500 Untouchables attended the meeting. The organizers had to fetch water for those who attended the meeting by paying money to Hindus!

In that meeting, Ambedkar 'exhorted' Untouchables

"to fight for their rights, give up their dirty and vicious habits and rise to full manhood. Thereafter high caste Hindus who were present and, who held out that they were the friends of the Untouchables, addressed the gathering and told the Untouchables to be bold and exercise the right that is given to them by law" (Vol. 5, p. 249).

The next day the conference resolved to take water from the Chawdar tank immediately. The Untouchables rose up in enthusiasm. Now those Hindus who had until then exhorted Untouchables to be bold and begin fearlessly to exercise their rights "immediately ran away" from the meeting.

The Untouchables led by Ambedkar and his co-workers marched in a procession through the main streets.

> "The Hindu inhabitants of the town saw the scene. They were taken by storm. They stood aghast witnessing this scene which they had never seen before. For the moment they seemed to be stunned and paralyzed. The procession in form of fours marched past and went to the Chawdar tank, and the Untouchables for the first time drank the water" (Vol. 5, p. 250).

It is needless to say that attacks on Untouchables in the villages continued as usual thereafter.

The Untouchables decided to conduct another conference in Mahad in the month of December. The Hindus filed a case in the Mahad court seeking a stay order prohibiting Untouchables who were again planning to enter the tank, and also to declare the tank as the property of the Hindus. The Hindus got the stay order at once. Now it is more appropriate to describe the problem as the problem of the government rather than that of Untouchables. The government itself had made a law permitting Untouchables to use the tank, had it not? Now the court gave a stay against that Act. It was the responsibility of the government to defend the Act. The conference of Untouchables decided to wait and see what the government would do. We have tried to enter the tank by virtue of the right which the law gave us. Now, the same law is preventing us from entering the tank. We have to follow the law instead of challenging it. We will be able to see to what extent the law would protect our right.—This is how the conference of Untouchables resolved and suspended their attempt of entering the tank again.

The case went up to the Bombay High Court.

> "The occasion for civil disobedience never came because the Untouchables won the suit and the Hindus lost it" (Vol. 5, p. 252).

The Untouchables won the case. But they won the case not because the court said that 'it was wrong on the part of Hindus to practice Untouchability'. The court did not explicitly state this. The arguments went on along the following question: whether the custom of Untouchability has been in existence since time immemorial or not? While Ambedkar argued that Untouchability has not existed since time immemorial, the Hindus on the other hand were unable to prove that Untouchability existed there since

time immemorial. The court decided the case against the Hindus on the ground that they failed to prove that the custom alleged by them in respect of the tank had existed since time immemorial. This means, however, that the court would have decided the case in favour of Hindus if they had proved that the custom of Untouchability had existed since time immemorial.

In the words of Ambedkàr:

> "...the Bombay High Court did not decide the issue whether the custom of Untouchability was valid or not. They decided the case against the Hindus on the ground that they failed to prove that the custom alleged by them in respect of the tank was not immemorial. They held that the custom itself was not proved. The tank became open to the Untouchables. But the Untouchables cannot be said to have gained their point. The main issue was whether the custom of Untouchability was a legal custom. Unfortunately the High Court avoided to give judgement on that issue" (Vol. 5, p. 252).

There are no details as to how many years it took for the judgement to come.

3) Burning of Manu Smriti

On December 20, 1927, when the second conference in connection with the struggle for Chawdar Tank was held in Mahad, the Untouchables undertook the programme of burning Manu Smriti. The conference had explained the necessity of that programme thus:

> "Taking into consideration the fact that the laws which are proclaimed in the name of Manu, the Hindu lawgiver, and which are contained in the Manu Smriti and which are recognized as the Code for the Hindus are insulting to persons of low caste, are calculated to deprive them of the rights of a human being and crush their personality. Comparing them in the light of the rights of men recognised all over the civilized world, this conference is of opinion that this Manu Smriti is not entitled to any respect and is undeserving of being called a sacred book to show its deep and profound contempt for it, the Conference resolves to burn a copy thereof, at the end of the proceedings, as a protest against the system of social inequality it embodies in the guise of religion" (Vol. 5, p. 254).

After this resolution the Holy Smriti of Hindus was burnt to ashes amidst joy.

4) Struggle for entry into Kalaram temple

"The next item in this history of direct action which is worthy of mention

relates to the entry in the famous Hindu Temple at Nasik known as the Kala Ram Temple" (Vol. 5, p. 252).

Except these 2 sentences in Vol. 5 depicting this incident, there are no other details elsewhere in Ambedkar's work on this matter. There is, however, a small piece of information on p.7 of volume 10. It tells that Untouchables staged Satyagraha in front of the Kalaram temple for about 5 years; yet they had not obtained entry into the temple by the time they ended Satyagraha. Incidentally, it is not Ambedkar but the editor of volume 10 has added an extract from an essay written by some other person. There is no name of the writer.

If we go by the narration which other books concerning Ambedkar provide, the information relating to the Kalaram temple is as follows: attempts to obtain entry into this temple began on March 2, 1930. The trustee refused entry. He closed the temple. Untouchables continued to sit in front of the temple. In a month's time, there occurred a compromise between Hindus and Untouchables. Hindus had agreed to participation of Untouchables in the Sri Rama Navami festival and to pulling the chariot together with Untouchables. But during the chariot festival, Hindus did not allow Untouchables and they alone drove the chariot. Untouchables tried to hold the chariot. There occurred physical fights and one untouchable youth died. Untouchables continued to do Satyagraha in front of the temple until 1935. (Did they do it daily or occasionally? No details. Also there are no details whether Untouchables got entry by the time they ended Satyagraha). The struggle for entry into temples went on in the states. But there is no information whether entry was allowed at any place.

5) Refusal to do unclean work

Society needs all the jobs that involve cleaning of dirt. But, it is the rule of Hindu society that Untouchables alone should do such jobs. The main source of living of Untouchables is cleaning of the streets and toilet, burial of dead animals. In some provinces there were laws that compel Untouchables to do these unclean jobs. In United Provinces, it was a legal offence for toilet cleaners to refuse to do their work. According to the Punjab City police Act of 1911, if a toilet cleaner wants to give up his job of toilet cleaning, he could make a representation to the High Court. That was the only recourse available to him. A toilet cleaner going to the high court! Anyway it is not possible; so he would be compelled to carry on doing the same job throughout his life!

Ambedkar summarises the history of Untouchables' refusal to do unclean work:

> "The question whether the Untouchables can be accused of having invited the curse of Untouchability upon themselves for doing the dirty work of the Hindus is really beside the point. What is important to note is that the Conference of the Untouchables which met in Mahad resolved that no Untouchable shall skin the dead animals of the Hindus, shall carry it or eat the carrion. The object of these resolutions was two-fold. The one object was to foster among the Untouchables self-respect and self-esteem. This was a minor object. The major object was to strike a blow at the Hindu Social Order. The Hindu Social Order is based upon a division of labour which reserves for the Hindus clean and respectable jobs and assigns to the Untouchables dirty and mean jobs and thereby clothes the Hindus with dignity and heaps ignominy upon the Untouchables. The resolution was a revolt against this part of the Hindu Social Order. It aimed at making the Hindus do their dirty jobs themselves. This is a brief summary of the history of the revolt of the Untouchables against the established order of the Hindu. It originated in Bombay. But it has spread to all parts of India" (Vol. 5, p. 258).

There were, however, court cases against the burning of Manu Smriti and then refusal of Untouchables to do unclean jobs.

Ambedkar described all these struggles as direct actions "aimed at the demolition of the Hindu Social Order by applying dynamite to its very foundations" (Vol. 5, p. 252). But this description applies only to those struggles that involved refusal to do unclean jobs. It won't apply to the same extent to other struggles. No doubt all these incidents are 'movements'. Any struggle—struggle waged collectively for rights against injustices —is a movement. But, all these movements are hardly powerful enough to blow up the Hindu Social Order. Only those movements which refused to do unclean jobs and those which refused to do unclean jobs without remuneration are so powerful.

No attempt that fights against Untouchables is futile. Temple entry is also somewhat useful and not useless. It is useful in the sense that if Hindus agree Untouchables' entry into temples, it implies that to that extent the Hindus stopped practising Untouchability. If this happens, Untouchability would definitely recede. Hindus may, then, also, begin to engage Untouchables as domestic workers. Untouchables may be able to start trading in the sale of milk, curds and vegetables. Thus, temple entry too would be able to change the situation of Untouchables. But, even then all the unclean jobs would be the duty of Untouchables. No change will take place in this aspect.

Compared to other movements, the movement to refuse unclean jobs directly questions the exploitative division of labour. Similarly, the movement refusing to render free labour will also question exploitation. These movements, without being aware of it, will turn into revolts against exploitative relations of labour.

Only lower castes' people have been performing all kinds of lowest manual labours necessary for the entire society since ages. That too, for remuneration worse than the minimum level. In such a society, the movement that refuses to go on doing all the unclean jobs for themselves constitutes a wonderful revolt against exploitative division of labour! If we could develop this movement further from its embryonic stage, then a situation will arise in which the population of upper castes too would be compelled to do the lowest manual labours. Such a movement would blow up the foundation of the exploitative society like dynamite. But in order to play such a crucial role, a revolt against 'exploitative relations of property' is a prerequisite. For Untouchables cannot refuse to engage in the only livelihood available to them before securing an alternative. A scavenger cannot give up scavenging work without another means of livelihood. In order to improve or change their way of living, therefore, the path of Untouchables should be intertwined with the struggle that would take away exploitative private property which is under the control of upper castes. However, the movements of Untouchables did not spend even a hundredth part of their energies— which is spent on temple entries—on the movements that oppose exploitation of labour. Their movements lack this fundamental approach altogether.

What was the response of the Hindus to the movements of Untouchables? The opinion of most Hindus was to oppose the change. A Hindu like Gandhi himself did not wholeheartedly accept the temple entry of Untouchables. He did not encourage either intercaste marriages or atleast intercaste-dining through his Harijan Sevak Sangh. Then what can we say about other Hindus? Hindus believed that Untouchables were born only to serve them and they can never become their equal.

Many a time does Ambedkar comment that Hindus were behaving selfishly. It is very surprising to note that the same Ambedkar feels that they (the Hindus) do not properly understand the struggle of the Untouchables. He says:

> "The Hindu does not look at the revolt of the Untouchables as an attempt on the part of the latter for social and economic improvement of their people. He looks at it as an attempt directed against him, an attempt to equalize. That is why he is opposed" (Vol. 5, p. 261).

This means Ambedkar thinks that Hindus were opposing the struggle of Untouchables simply because they didn't understand it and they would not oppose the struggle if they understand it properly.

If Untouchables wage struggle for equality, with whom do they want equality? With Hindus! A struggle for equality is also aimed against Hindus! Hence, the Hindus indeed understood it quite correctly. What they did not like was 'equality'. The Hindus constantly and clearly indicated that Untouchables should not try to become equal to them. They ask the untouchable who comes to the office as an employee: "Do you dare to sit equally with us in the chair?" To the untochables who wear good clothing they say, "Do you dare wear clothes on par with us?" If an Untouchable is given a ministership, people like Gandhi would say, "So you have found an untouchable to make a minister now?" The Hindus have been warning that the Untouchables should not attempt to become their equals in any respect. The Hindus are opposing Untouchables, not because they have not understood but because they understood that Untouchables are fighting for equality. Should Hindus think that Untouchables were waging struggles in order to improve their economic life? When those struggles are against them, how can Hindus think, " what do we lose if the Untouchables are waging their struggles?" The Hindus know what Hindus lose. Hindus knew that if Untouchables refused to come to clean the toilets, they would have to do that work for themselves. If the situation of Untouchables improves to some extent, the domination of Hindus too diminishes to that extent.

What would Hindus say if Untouchables were to ask them: "Why don't you understand that we are fighting with you for equality? Why do you oppose us?" The Hindus would say, "We know that. That is why we are opposing you". They will not say, "Equality with us? Well, then it is good! Carry on your fight with us nicely!" It is strange to note that Ambedkar interprets that the Hindus misunderstand the struggle of Untouchables as the struggle aimed at them and not as an attempt to achieve equality. Any attempt to achieve equality itself is a fight against Hindus. Both mean the same. The Hindu was, obviously, far more intelligent than Ambedkar!

6) Demands of Dalits

They put forward these in (1) the document presented at the Round Table Conference of 1930 (Vol. 9, p. 304 onwards); and (2) the documents prepared in 1944 and 1947 on behalf of the Indian Federation of Scheduled Castes (Vol. 9, p. 304 onwards; and Vol. 1, p. 381 onwards). However, we should not forget that the demand for reservations as long ago as the

Conference held in 1917 under the Chairmanship of Narayan Chandavarkar. In brief these were their demands:

➢ The Constitution should declare that Untouchability was illegal. Untouchables should be relieved of this social curse before they give consent to the constitution.

➢ All citizens of India are equal before the law. If Hindus resort to atrocities against Untouchables when they try to make use of the rights given to them by law, such atrocities should be declared offences, and punishments should also be announced.

➢ All citizens should have the right to utilize educational institutions, roads, paths, streets, tanks, wells and all other kinds of water resources, land meant for public use, water, air, religious institutions and so on.

➢ The Hindus alone occupied all spheres of life from village to the capital city. Therefore, scheduled castes should have reservations in proportion to their numbers: (1) in the Legislatures, (2) the Executive, (3) in Municipalities and Local Boards, (4) in the Public Services and (5) on the Public Service Commissions. Further these rights ought to be beyond the powers of the Legislature or the Executive to amend, alter, or abrogate.

➢ The Depressed Classes (Dalits) must have the right to elect their own representatives from among the Dalits. They should be elected by adult franchise and not by nomination. Further, Dalit representatives should be elected from Dalit castes only and persons from other castes should not be selected as Dalit representatives.

➢ Like Hindus, Dalits too should have the rights to enter into contracts, rent land, purchase and sell property.

➢ All persons should have the right to pursue any occupation, to reside in any area, to practise and preach any religion.

➢ The Government must allot some funds for the education of Scheduled Castes: State Governments for education within the country and the Central Government for education abroad.

➢ The Joint Electorate system worked out in the Poona Pact should be abandoned and Separate electorates ought to be introduced. (This is in the document of 1947).

➢ At present Dalits are obliged to live in slums on the outskirts of the Hindu villages. Although this appears as if Dalits are living with Hindus in the same village, Dalits are in fact living separately without any relation with others. Therefore, in order to liberate them from those slums, the government should form separate villages for Dalits with all amenities. It

should allot some special fund to purchase the uncultivated land for this purpose from those willing to sell and also uncultivated land. The government should establish a Settlement Commission for this purpose.

➢ There should be a separate ministry to take care of all the affairs concerning reservations for Dalits.

➢ If the government wants to make any amendments to these provisions, it may be allowed to do so only after 25 years following the implementation of the Constitution. (In 1947 document).

Briefly, these are the demands of Dalits. Some more clarity is needed with regard to the demand for 'separate villages'. When Dalits lived on the outskirts of Hindu villages, their localities were known as 'Mala locality', 'Madiga locality', and 'Mahar locality' and 'Chamar locality'. When separate villages are established for these castes, those villages will be known as 'Mala village' and 'Madiga village' or 'Mahar village' and 'Chamar village'. This does not matter because both conditions are similar. But Dalits may be relieved of some sufferings if all the necessary amenities are provided in their separate villages.

Ambedkar (Vol. 1, pp: 425-6) thought that these separate settlements would also relieve Dalits from the pitiable economic condition in the sense that they could live without depending on the land of the Hindus, the wage labour which the Hindus offer and wage rates which the Hindus fix. We don't find any explanation on this issue: How would Dalits acquire lands just because they live in separate villages? How would they get on without going to the villages of Hindus for work? Without discussing such questions, Ambedkar declares that separate settlements would relieve Dalits from pitiable economic conditions.

All the demands which Dalit leaders put forward are wholly justified. However, education and employment through reservations would reach only a small number of Dalits even if all these demands were really implemented. Yet access to education and employment even to those minimum numbers of Dalits would definitely improve their living conditions. But what actually is needed is a solution not simply for a few but to all Dalits; not only temporarily but permanently.

Ambedkar discussed 'permanent solutions' as well. He discussed the question of 'eradication of poverty' also. When we view reservations together with all these questions, we get all solutions. We have to see what they are.

12 NOT ONLY 'DIVISION OF LABOUR', BUT ALSO 'DIVISION OF LABOURERS' IS FOUND IN ALL THE COUNTRIES

Those who defend the caste system put forward different reasons for the need of the system. Ambedkar's essay *Annihilation of Caste* begins with the answers to all the arguments of the defenders of caste system. We have already seen a couple of those replies. Yet let us first recall them and then examine the other aspects of the subject. All these aspects are, mainly, from the essay *Annihilation of Caste* (Vol. 1, pp: 23-96).

An argument of defenders of caste: Castes came into existence out of racial differences. The caste system was necessary for the continuation of racial purity by preventing admixture and 'commingling of blood' of different races.

Ambedkar's answer: There are no racial differences in the Indian population. Hence the argument that racial differences are the basis for castes is untenable. Even if we assume that there were racial differences, why can't blood relations form between races? There won't be any harm to the reproduction. There should not be blood relations between human beings and animals; but why shouldn't there be blood relations among humans? In fact there are no races in the world which are free from admixture of blood. 'Purity of races' is a meaningless notion.

Another argument of defenders: The caste system came into existence for the formation of better and stronger offspring. Hence, the system should stay.

Ambedkar's answer: If the caste system is meant for better offspring, it is desirable. But, it does not happen so in the caste system. There is no argument in the caste system that only a better woman and a better man in a caste should meet for the sake of reproduction. Any pair of man and woman in a given caste can meet through marriage. If the caste system formed for a strong offspring, all Hindus would have been very strong. But Hindus are a race of pygmies and dwarfs stunted in stature and wanting in stamina. It is a nation nine-tenths of which is declared to be unfit for

military service. Even according to the arguments of the defenders of the caste system there should not be intercaste marriages; but why shouldn't there be intercaste dining? What is the reason?

Gandhi's kind of arguments: The caste system—according to which persons pursue their respective caste occupation—gives a kind of discipline.

Ambedkar's answer: The occupation of an individual should not be decided at birth itself. He or she should have the freedom to pursue occupation of his/her choice. Hence it is wrong to defend the system of caste occupations.

Radhakrishanan's kind of argument: What is the loss for Hindu religion if castes exist? Hindu religion has existed in fact for generations, hasn't it?

Ambedkar's answer: The question is not whether a community lives or dies. There are different modes of survival. But all modes of survival are not equally honourable. There is a gulf between merely living and living worthy.

Argument of Arya Samajists: The existing caste system consisting of hundreds of castes is faulty. But 'the four Varna system' is not bad. Like varnas, castes too should depend not on 'birth' but on 'worth' (guna).

Ambedkar's answer: Why should we divide human beings into four castes only? Can we not respect a good person without calling him a 'Brahmin'? Since opposition to the caste system began in this modern age, they started the argument that 'caste should be based on worth', only in order to attract the lower castes. But it is totally impossible to implement this new method.

There is, however, another argument that is entirely different from all these arguments. It is the argument of 'division of labour'. This we have seen before to some extent. This argument does not defend the caste system like other arguments. It has its own assumption regarding the basis for the beginning of castes. It assumes that division of labour might be the basis for castes. We, however, have already seen the possible question regarding this assumption. That question was, 'when division of labour exists in all the countries, why does caste system exist only in India?" This is a reasonable question. But the researchers could not identify the 'specific situation' that gave rise to the caste system. Though this specific situation is not clear to us, this argument of division of labour seems to be more logical than other arguments. It seems logical to none else; even to Ambedkar! Even according to Ambedkar, occupations were the original

basis for four varnas. The four varnas themselves became castes. It was Ambedkar who said all this. Based on this, it is clear that occupations alone are the basis for castes. Further, Ambedkar made another point still more emphatically:

> "The Hindu Social Order is based upon a division of labour which reserves for the Hindus clean and respectable jobs and assigns to the Untouchables dirty and mean jobs and thereby clothes the Hindus with dignity and heaps ignominy upon the Untouchables" (Vol. 5, p.258).

What does this mean? This means that the distinction between Hindus and Untouchables is due to division of labour. Indeed, this argument of division of labour applies not only to untouchables but also to castes.

Ambedkar further says as follows:

> "Caste system is not merely division of labour. *It is also a division of labourers.* Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. Caste System is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour.—It is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other. In no other country is the division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers... This division of labour is not spontaneous, it is not based on natural aptitudes" (Vol. 1, p. 47).

Here we need first understand the questions: what is division of labour? What is division of labourers?

Division of labour means, performance of different kinds of labour by different individuals.

Division of labourers, according to Ambedkar, is a hierarchy in which labourers are graded one above the other. That is, existence of labourers in terms of 'castes'.

Now, we have to understand the meaning of the expression that 'caste system is not merely division of labour but also a division of labourers'. Here Ambedkar, while acknowledging the fact of division of labour, he is observing further that 'there is another aspect namely division of labourers'. This means, Ambedkar is not saying that 'caste system has nothing to do with division of labour'. Moreover, he is acknowledging the relationship between the two. Which means, even according to Ambedkar, division of labour alone is the basis for the caste system.

Here there are three aspects, namely, caste system, division of labour and division of labourers. What is the connection between these three aspects! How should we understand these relations?

Though 3 aspects appear here, there are only 2 aspects in reality.

The first one is division of labour. The second one, division of labourers is due to division of labour (castes). These two are the same. We have seen that division of labour means 'performance of different kinds of labour by different persons'. This we find at any place, in any region and in any country.

Division of labourers, even according to Ambedkar, means 'hierarchy in which labourers are graded one above the other.' This is also found in any country. But, these hierarchical gradations are in the form of castes in India. None has given a right answer as to why the hierarchy of workers assumed the form of castes. Ambedkar too did not say. What we have to understand here is that even where there are no castes, labourers are graded one above the other. Nowhere do we find all workers as a single category without involving hierarchical differences. One can investigate this issue if necessary. Labourers in all the countries are graded one above the other in a hierarchy. It is because the values of the labours—which the labourers perform—are graded one above the other in a hierarchical manner.

If we consider a 'place of work', it requires both manual and mental labours. (In some work places only manual labours are required and not mental labours). If we consider one kind of manual labour and one kind of mental labour in the same measure of time, the value of manual labour will invariably be more than the value of mental labour. Or, if the two are mental labours and if they stand at a different place from one another, their values too differ. Similarly, values of different kinds of manual labour also differ.

If we take the 'lowest' manual labour (e.g., toilet cleaning) and the 'highest' kind of mental labour (e.g., the work of a doctor), there will be a vast difference between their values. All this is correct according to the law of value.

If a person always performs a manual labour and another person always performs mental labour, the education, training and the labour-power that they have to learn will be different. The values of the labours that they perform will be graded one above the other. Which means, the income of one person will be higher and the income of another person will be lower. Though both persons are labourers, they will be unequal rather than equal persons. This means, they form different categories. Hence, the old division of labour should change in such a way that every person would do certain kinds of manual labour and certain kinds of mental labour. Only when this happens will the categories disappear. That is a different discussion.

What we have to understand for the present is that the values of different kinds of labour will be different since the levels of labour are different. To the naturally formed differences between values, some unnatural factors in exploitative societies add and those differences will further increase manifold.

It is natural that there exists some difference between the value of labour of a toilet cleaner and that of a doctor. None can remove that difference. But it is not necessary that the difference is so wide as it exists in a society based on exploitation. However, these two kinds of labourers cannot become equal even if we consider their difference to a natural extent because that naturally existing difference is also a difference. Hence they constitute two different categories. This is the reason for the division of labourers into different categories. Further, in any work place, there will be employees (these people are also labourers) who perform the labour of control over other labourers. This labour of control is necessary due to relations of exploitation. This situation too results in 'hierarchical difference' among labourers. In this manner too, labourers will be graded one above the other. If we consider these conditions of hierarchy as 'division of labourers', this exists not only in India but also in all the countries. There will be hierarchical differences among labourers even where there are no castes. We should not assume that these hierarchical differences are present only in India.

Another point in Ambedkar's argument is that the division of labour in India is not spontaneous nor is it based on natural aptitudes. Not only in India but also in any country do we find division of labour based on spontaneity. In no country do we find choice of occupations by the labourers based on aptitudes.

In countries where capitalism began a long time ago, labourers are able to change their occupations quickly enough due to modern machinery. Even such changes do not always take place according to the aptitudes of the labourers. Under capitalism, demand for labourers in different branches of industry varies frequently, it rises or falls. Labourers do receive education and training in accordance with the branches where there is demand. All this will be in the form of race in search of livelihood wherever there is opportunity and not something based on personal aptitudes.

In countries like India where capitalism started late, skill in labour still depends to a degree on hand tools and small scale machinery due to the absence of system of modern machinery. Under these conditions, labourers are tied down to some extent to the hereditary caste (family) occupations. Yet the process of moving away from the caste occupations has already begun among the labourers in India. Commenting on the

abandonment of caste occupations by Brahmins in the contemporary situation, in another context, Ambedkar said:

> "Almost every Brahmin has transgressed the rule of Caste. The number of Brahmins who sell shoes is far greater than those who practice priesthood. Not only have the Brahmins given up their ancestral calling of priesthood for trading but they have entered trades which are prohibited to them by the *Shastras*" (Vol. 1, p. 95).

It is not possible, however, for those engaged in manual labour to change occupations as easily as the Brahmins do. Yet this change has not altogether left out the lowest castes. But, we find this change to a limited extent among them.

Finally, the essence of the matter is that Ambedkar's arguments are not correct: that division of labourers is specific only to India and that labourers in India alone are unable to choose their occupations according to aptitude. The same thing happens not only in India but also in every country.

If we correctly analyse the expressions, 'caste system is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers', we will arrive at the following meanings:

1) Division of labour is the basis of castes (occupations) just as in the case of four varnas.

2) Division of labourers (hierarchical differences among laborers) exists in all countries. Here, it is in the 'form of castes'. This means that whether you call 'caste' or 'division of labourers', both mean the same thing.

There are no greater meanings in the expression 'division of labourers' which Ambedkar used.

1) Some comments of Ambedkar on 'caste system'

The following are some of the useful observations of Ambedkar on the caste system.

➢ It was the Mohammedans who introduced the term 'Hindu'. We do not find the term 'Hindu' in any Sanskrit text before the invasion of Mohammedans. In fact there is no such thing as 'Hindu society'. What exists is a collection of castes.

➢ Some people argue that there is unity in the diversity of castes. But we find diversity only when there the rights are common to all. Where is the question of unity when some people do not have any rights at all?

➢ It is possible for Hindus to embrace other religions. But it is not possible for the people of other religions to embrace the Hindu religion because of the question of which caste should one join in order to embrace Hindu religion. The caste system does not allow people to change from one caste to another either. It does not permit newcomers.

➢ Among Muslims there are certain groups, namely, Shiya, Sunni, Sheikh, Saiyad, Khatik and Pinjari. The group among Sikhs are Jat, Roda, Mazdi and Ramdasi. But these groups, according to Ambedkar, are fundamentally different from castes among Hindus. They do not have the same social significance. However, he has not given details whether intergroup dining and marriage exist. "Among the Hindus inter-marriage must necessarily be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindus" (Vol. 1, p. 67). This implies that intergroup marriages do not take place among non-Hindus and that they have to take place. If intergroup marriages do not take place, those groups too constitute castes, don't they? There is no information in Ambedkar's essay to understand this aspect.

13 WHAT DID AMBEDKAR SAY IN "ANNIHILATION OF CASTE"?

The arguments of those who defend the caste system do not stand to reason. Hence, the solution for the problem of castes is to abolish castes altogether.

To abolish caste, inter-caste marriage should begin and they should take place as a normal practice. "The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage", says Ambedkar (Vol. 1, p. 67). This view is hundred percent correct. Though we can not trace the origin of castes clearly, inter-caste marriages are the means to abolish castes. As a result of inter-caste marriages an offspring that has no caste barriers will emerge. Without this change, the caste distinctions will not vanish even if inter-caste dining and inter-caste friendship continue for generations. Castes will disappear only if inter-caste marriages take place as a normal practice.

Well, then, how should we start this programme? As an answer to this question, Ambedkar says that we have to begin the programme of abolition of castes by reforming the Hindu religion. For it is the Hindu religion which dictates the caste system. Then how to reform Hindu religion? What should we do?

1) How to reform the Hindu Religion?

Concerning this issue, Ambedkar enumerates certain 'cardinal items' of reform as follows:

> "There should be one and only one standard book of Hindu Religion, acceptable to all Hindus and recognized by all Hindus. This of course means that all other books of Hindu religion such as *Vedas, Shastras* and *Puranas*, which are treated as sacred and authoritative, must by law cease to be so and the preaching of any doctrine, religious or social contained in these books should be penalized. (2) It should be better if priesthood among Hindus was abolished. But as this seems to be impossible, the priesthood must at least cease to be hereditary. Every person who professes to be a Hindu shall be entitled to be a priest unless he has passed an examination prescribed by the State and holds a *sanad* from the State permitting him to practise. (3) No ceremony performed by a priest who does not hold a *sanad* shall be deemed to be valid in law and it should be made penal for a person who has no *sanad* to officiate as a priest. (4) A priest should be the servant of the State and should be subject to the disciplinary action by the State in the matter of his morals, beliefs and worship, in addition to his being subject along with other citizens to the ordinary law of the land. (5) The number of priests should be limited by law according to the requirements of the State as is done in the case of the I.C.S." (Vol. 1, pp: 76-77).

This is how we have to reform Hindu religion, according to Ambedkar. Of these five items, the first point is most important. The government should prepare a single standard book for Hindus just as Christians have the Bible and Muslims have the Quran. Such a book should not have any mention of the Four Varnas or castes. All Hindus should recognize and accept the book. Once such a standard book is formed, propagation of other Hindu religious texts ought to be made an offence!

Ambedkar opines that inter-caste marriages will undoubtedly take place if we reform the Hindu religion, since such reform would not mention 'castes'.

> "...it would take ages before a breach is made. But whether the doing of the deed takes time or whether it can be done quickly, you must not forget that if you wish to bring about a breach in the system then you have got to apply the dynamite to the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, which deny any part to reason, to *Vedas* and *Shastras*, which deny any part to morality. You must destroy the Religion of the *Shrutis* and the *Smritis*. Nothing else will avail. This is my considered view of the matter" (Vol.1, pp: 74-75).

Frequently, Ambedkar refers to 'reason'. But how can religion, god and priesthood coincide with reason? Reason will naturally take people

so far that they give up religion. But Ambedkar's reason stops at a standard religious text, religious teachers, priests and passing of a government examination!

How much reason is there in such activities as making idols of stone or brass, constructing temples around those idols, putting food stuffs in front of them, decorating them with silk clothes, putting crowns over their heads and worshipping them? How much knowledge would be manifested in all such activities?

Ambedkar considered the jobs of priests and religious teachers as 'occupations' and 'labours' that are necessary for society. Ambedkar thinks that worshipping god and religious activities are as necessary as weaving, tailoring, carpentry and transport and all those who do such acts of worship are also toilers. Hence, his talk of reason and religious reform went on in this fashion!

We have to see many more issues which Ambedkar discussed concerning 'inter-caste marriages'.

Ambedkar originally wrote this essay on *Annihilation of Caste* in order to read it in a conference of an association of Hindu reformers in Lahore called "Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal". The objectives of the association included inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriage. This means that this association had a higher objectives than Mr. Gandhi's Harijan Sevak Sangh. In his essay, Ambedkar tells those reformers that organizing inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages would serve no purpose. It is necessary to free people from 'the thralldom of Shastras' and if they do so, people would inter-dine and inter-marry!

But does organizing inter-caste marriages not mean making people free from the thralldom of Shastras? Why do people prefer and organize inter-caste marriages if they believe in Shastras that dictate practice of caste distinctions. Does it not mean that those who like such changes are practically expressing their rejection of Shastras? Also, does it not mean that reformers who encourage such changes are preaching people not to care Shastras? What is there to oppose in this matter?

But Ambedkar says, "you must not only discard the *Shastras*, you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak" (Vol. 1, p. 69). Ambedkar says that it is not enough if the reformers of Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal 'discard' Shastras but they should also 'deny' the authority of Shastras. He says that the two (discard and denial) are not the same. What does 'doing things as Buddha and Nanak did' mean? Buddha denied the authority of the Hindu religion and started Buddhism. Guru Nanak started Sikhism. Should the reformers of Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal too give up the

Hindu religion? If Ambedkar wanted people to deny the authority of the Hindu religion, why did he propose some cardinal items of reform of the Hindu religion? Should people totally discard or deny Hindu religion totally or retain it by reforming certain parts of it? This is not clear.

Addressing those Hindu reformers, Ambedkar further says:

> "You must have the courage to tell the Hindus, that what is wrong with them is their religion—the religion which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of Caste. Will you show that courage?" (Vol.1, p. 69).

How could those reformers undertake the reform of inter-caste marriages if they lacked courage? In fact they had named their association as 'JAT-PAT-TODAK MANDAL' (meaning an association that breaks caste and other related barriers). In fact the reformers such as these face many hurdles. They would need to confront conflicts and controversial arguments and counter-arguments. Condemnation, blame and threats fall on them. The reformers will withstand all such things.

When a marriage takes place between a person of a lower caste and a higher caste, it is the person of the higher caste that has to show courage. The person belonging to the lower caste will not have any role in showing 'courage'. It only means that the person of high caste has demonstrated goodness, refinement, courage, as well as denial of Shastras and society.

Similarly if Brahmin reformers organise inter-caste marriages, we can undoubtedly say that they are very good, refined and courageous persons.

But, disregarding the goodness of such reformers, Ambedkar questions them as though they lack courage and he alone has the courage to reject castes and Shastras. Does it not mean belittling people with good intentions, if he questions them like this: "Do you have the courage to say so? Can you show such courage? Do you have courage? Do you have...?" And so on.

Would Ambedkar have any answer, if those reformers had asked him, "Are you not able to understand that we have the courage and culture since we are encouraging inter-caste marriages?" But those reformers, without asking like that, tolerated Ambedkar's words.

Ridiculing such reformers, Ambedkar further says:

> "Reformers working for the removal of untouchability... do not seem to realize that the acts of the people are merely the results of their beliefs inculcated upon their minds by the *Shastras* and that people will not change their conduct until they cease to believe in the sanctity of the *Shastras* on which their conduct is founded. No wonder that such efforts have not produced any results. You also seem to be erring in the same

way as the reformers working in the cause of removing untouchability" (Vol. 1, p. 68).

If we consider the issue of untouchability, it was Ambedkar himself who said that the *Vedas* and *Manusmritis* did not mention them. When there is no reference to untouchability, where is the need to offer a critique of the Shastras to the people as part of the programme for eradicating untouchability? What is the need to tell them to reject the Shastras? If at all we want to tell people, we have to tell them in such a way that they develop respect for the Shastras: "There is no reference to untouchability either in the Vedas or in the other Shastras. Shastras are very positive in this respect". Why should the reformers tell people so that people reject Shastras?

The fact that reformers working for the eradication of untouchability did not reject the Vedas, etc., (since there is no reference in them to untouchability) indicates that they (the reformers) have not committed any mistake.

It is only Ambedkar who has always been taking wrong steps at every point. It is he who said that there is no reference to untouchability in Shastras. It is again he who is finding fault with reformers for not rejecting such Shastras (in which there is no reference to untouchability). Nowhere do we find evidence to suggest that Ambedkar realizes how haphazard his arguments were!

2) Is fusion of sub-castes 'mischievous'?

After advising the Hindu reformers to 'reject' Hindu religious texts, Ambedkar discussed the question of how to abolish castes. This discussion is again in the essay, *Annihilation of Caste*. Of all the writings of Ambedkar, this essay is most important for our examination because it discussed the question of 'annihilation of caste'. What is the path which Ambedkar showed for the annihilation of caste? Is annihilation of caste possible or not according to him? Has he discussed the issues correctly? We have to carefully understand all these questions.

This is how Ambedkar begins his discussion:

> "How to abolish caste? This is a question of supreme importance. There is a view that in the reform of caste, the first step to take, is to abolish sub-castes. This view is based upon the supposition that there is a greater similarity in manners and status between sub-castes than there is between castes. I think, this is an erroneous supposition" (Vol. 1, p. 67).

'Sub-castes' mean branches, sects or constituent parts within a caste. For example, let us say that there are some sects within the Brahmin caste. Those are 'sub-castes'. All persons in all the sects/sub-castes are Brahmins.

'Brahmin' is the cover term of the main caste. Similarly, 'Mala' is the main caste. If there are sections within Mala caste, they would be 'sub-castes'.

Marriages do not take place between different castes. Every one knows this fact. There is a situation where there are no marriages between sub-castes either. While this is the situation, the question is how to start the programme of annihilation of caste? We have to find out the correct path.

Some people argue that we should begin with the fusion of sub-castes. When they say like this, it does not mean they are saying that 'fusion of sub-castes alone should take place and not the fusion of the main castes'. Anything can happen depending upon the situation and possibility. But they think that to begin a programme for the annihilation of caste, fusion of sub-castes is an easy thing that can take place.

But Ambedkar does not agree with this view. His argument proceeds like this: suppose North Indian Brahmins and South Indian Brahmins constitute two branches. The North Indian Brahmins are cooks and water carriers and the South Indian Brahmins are of high social position. The Vaishyas and Kayasthas are intellectually and socially on a par with Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India. While situation is such, it is practically possible to fuse Vysyas and Kayasthas of Northern India with the Brahmins of Southern India instead of fusing the Brahmins of Northern and Southern India in the name of fusing sub-castes of the main castes. Similarly in the matter of food, Southern Indian Brahmins are vegetarians while Kashmiri and Bengali Brahmins are not vegetarians. It is easier for the two different castes with similar food habits to fuse together than the fusion of the two sub-castes with different food habits though both are Brahmins. The non-Brahmins like Vyshyas, Jains and Marvaris are closer to Southern Indian Brahmins in their food habits. Hence, we need not think that fusion of sub-castes is much easier than the fusion of main castes (Vol. 1, p. 67).

Different castes rather than sub-castes can definitely fuse in such situations when they are socially closer. No one will say that they should not merge. Here the question is, 'is closeness not possible between sub-castes of the same region when closeness is possible between different castes living in different regions?' There may not be similarity or closeness between Northern Indian Brahmins and Southern Indian Brahmins, but will it not be between different sects within North Indian Brahmins? Can we not fuse them? Similarly, are there not different sects within Southern Indian Brahmins? Can't they merge? Compared to the closeness between different castes living in distant regions, we find more instances of closeness between the sub-castes of a caste in the same region.

Those who talk of fusion or abolition of sub-castes do not oppose fusion or abolition of actual castes. They favour abolition of any kind, whether of sub-castes or of main castes. Similarly, those who insist on the abolition of castes in the first instance should not oppose the abolition of sub-castes either. But Ambedkar considers the abolition of sub-castes in the first instance as mischievous. Because, Ambedkar says, abolition of main castes may not take place after the abolition of sub-castes and that the main castes would become more powerful and hence we should begin with the abolition of main castes. In Ambedkar's words:

> "...assuming that the fusion of sub-Castes is possible, what guarantee is there that the abolition of sub-Castes will necessarily lead to the abolition of Castes? On the contrary, it may happen that the process may stop with the abolition of sub-Castes. In that case, the abolition of sub-Castes will only help to strengthen the Castes and make them more powerful and therefore more mischievous. This remedy is therefore neither practicable nor effective and may easily prove to be a wrong remedy" (Vol. 1, p. 67).

This means, according to Ambedkar fusion of main castes should take place first. Only then the fusion of sub-castes should take place. For example, if we assume that there are some sub-castes within the Brahmin caste, marriages between these sub-castes should not take place. Similarly, fusion of sub-castes within the Mala caste should not take place first. Marriages between Brahmin and Mala castes should begin and these two castes should fuse together. Only then, fusion of sub-castes of Brahmin caste and likewise the fusion of sub-castes of Mala caste should take place. It follows that a Brahmin sub-caste, though not inclined to fuse with other sub-castes of the same main caste must agree to fuse with any one of the Mala sub-castes! Only then should it fuse with other Brahmin sub-castes! Does any one with common sense call this 'reasoning'?

When the Brahmin and Mala castes fuse and become one, where is the question of existence of sub-castes and their subsequent fusion? How strange is this argument! "What guarantee is there that the abolition of sub-castes will necessarily lead to the abolition of castes?" asks Ambedkar, doesn't he? But, a reform, from whichever side it may begin, will extend its influence to all sides. A 'change', whether good or bad, does not stop where it began. If fusion of sub-castes is really taking place at a given point of time, the main castes during that period cannot remain intact. We need not doubt that the reform would stop at the abolition of sub-castes only.

Let us suppose that it may happen like that. That is, suppose the entire change would stop at the abolition of sub-castes only. What do we

lose from this? Compared to the past it is more advantageous and there is no harm. This is how it is advantageous: Let us suppose that there are 8 sub-castes within Brahmin caste and marriages do not take place between those sub-castes. This means, there are 8 castes here. In such a situation as this, let us say, there began marriages between sub-castes following the path of abolition of sub-castes first. Which means, all sub-castes become one and only Brahmin caste remains. That is, instead of 8 castes, only one caste remains.

Similarly, if we assume that there were 4 sub-castes within the Mala caste and marriages have now begun between those sub-castes, there remains only one caste instead of 4 castes.

Once there were 12 castes in total at the 2 places taken together. Now that situation no more exists and only 2 main castes remain. They are the Brahmin and Mala castes. If these two castes also merge, there won't be a caste system at all. Or, even if those 2 castes still remain separately, what do we lose? The situation in which those 2 castes exist was already there in the past. Those castes continue to exist even now as they did in the past. There is no loss afresh.

But Ambedkar argues that fusion or abolition of sub-castes will only help to strengthen the castes, make them more powerful, therefore more mischievous and hence it is a wrong path. Well what will the main castes do with the strength after becoming more powerful? Will they wage wars against each other? Even after becoming powerful they won't marry each other. This is what happens, isn't it? But such a situation existed in the past also; didn't it?

Can anybody, through their argument, demonstrate how fusion of sub-castes would make castes more mischievous?

A sub-caste in the Brahmin caste will have fewer objections to fuse with another sub-caste within its own caste and will have more objections to fuse with entirely a different caste.

To visualize inter-caste marriages, the only logical method is to visualize the fusion of sub-castes of the same region.

If sub-castes merge, the number of castes decreases and the scope of marriages broadens. This is a very good change compared to the past.

A sub-caste in a given caste would like to fuse first with another sub-caste and it won't like to fuse with another caste in the first instance itself. Therefore, to begin with abolition of sub-castes is practical and the only correct path! But Ambedkar's argument goes to the following extent:

If at all anything should happen, abolition of castes should take place first; otherwise all the caste distinctions including sub-castes will have to remain forever. Let there not be any change. Abolition of sub-castes is more mischievous! This is the trend of his argument!

Here, there is no reasoning that it is desirable for a good change to begin at any corner, instead of not beginning at all. Will any name be more suitable than 'crazy argument' to this argument which implies that it is very dangerous if caste distinctions diminish?

Not only here but also in many contexts, Ambedkar doesn't like others' arguments however good they may be since others put forward them. It is he alone who has to say 'great' things and has to reject whatever others say. What will remain if he rejects even a good argument? Only a wrong argument! That is what he could offer! The same thing is happening at every place!

See how strangely did Ambedkar's argument go!

> "If a caste claims the right to inter-dine and inter-marry with another caste placed above it, it is frozen, instantly it is told by mischief-mongers, and there are many Brahmins amongst such mischief-mongers, that it will have to concede inter-dining and inter-marriage with castes below it!" (Vol. 1, p. 72).

What mischief did those Brahmins whom Ambedkar called 'mischief-mongers' do in this context? What did they say? They say that a caste should not only try to fuse with castes above it but also fuse with castes below it and that it should give opportunity to other castes to mix with it. Is it wrong to say this? Is this mischief-mongering? Will attempts at annihilation of caste be hampered if they say so?

If the attempts are really destroyed, it would happen for the following reasons: There is a caste called **B**. It has the desire to fuse with castes above it but doesn't like to mix with the castes below it. Suppose somebody says to **B** that it 'should not only fuse with castes above but also with those below it'. Then **B** begins to ponder over it. "Oh, I have to mix with castes below me if I mix with castes above me! What a nuisance this is!" Due to this fear, it will stop trying to mix with castes above it as well! If this happens, the attempts of **B** to annihilate caste will stop. Then we have to criticise **B** only. That is, we criticise those people who would like to mix only with upper castes and not with lower castes. But we cannot find fault with those who say that 'one should mix with all'.

Ambedkar's intention in calling Brahmins 'mischief-mongers' in this context is this: People of caste **B** are eager to mix with upper castes, aren't they? They are not ready to mix with lower castes. Then why should

Brahmins insist on them thus, "You should mix not only with upper castes but also with lower castes!" They may change after some time, won't they? If you frighten them by asking to mix with lower castes immediately, they may stop trying to mix even with upper castes you see! Thus the whole attempt will be destroyed. Look at Brahmins! How are they frightening people?—This is what Ambedkar meant in calling Brahmins 'mischief-mongers'.

Let us suppose that Brahmins said all that not with a good intention but with the intention to frighten people. Caste **B** could stand fearless, isn't it? Caste **B** can tell Brahmins thus, "We don't have any objection to mixing with lower castes. When we want to mix with upper castes, don't we know that we should mix with lower castes as well, How will the attempt of **B** to annihilate caste be destroyed by the words of Brahmins if they have such a view? Caste **B** will give up all its attempts to annihilate caste if it does not hold such a view and if it does not like to mix with castes below it. Then we have to critise **B**, or to use a Telugu idiom, 'give grass' to **B** to eat.

But Ambedkar does not criticise **B**. Moreover he has sympathy for it! His entire anger is on Brahmins who gave a useful caution that a given caste should also "concede interdining and intermarriage with castes below it" This is the justice here!

3) Is 'annihilation of caste' impossible?

All the people belonging to lower castes feel happy whenever they hear and wherever they read the expression 'annihilation of caste'. They experience a hope that they would find a solution for the 'annihilation of caste' in a book with that title.

But Ambedkar's essay gradually concludes that annihilation of caste is impossible! In this context, we experience doubt, surprise and sorrow simultaneously: Has Ambedkar titled his essay *Annihilation of Caste*, then, merely, to say that 'annihilation of caste' is impossible?

To say that 'annihilation of caste' is impossible, Ambedkar showed mainly 2 reasons:

1) Brahmins don't agree for it.
2) No caste would like to change.

Discussing these two factors, the essay ends without a definite conclusion and a programme for the people. The essay which starts with much enthusiasm, leaves its readers finally in despair.

We have to carefully understand why a person, who is opposed to the caste system, is saying so. Le us examine his views.

> "[Annihilation of caste] is a stupendous task, well-nigh impossible. The Hindus hold to the sacredness of the social order. Caste has a divine basis. You must therefore destroy the sacredness and divinity with which Caste has become invested. In the last analysis, this means you must destroy the authority of the *Shastras* and the *Vedas*... Speaking for myself, I see the task to be well-nigh impossible. Perhaps you would like to know why I think so. Out of the many reasons, which have led me to take this view, I will mention some, which I regard much important. One of these reasons is the attitude of hostility, which the Brahmins have shown towards this question.... Is there any hope of the Brahmins ever taking up a lead in the future in this matter? I say no. You may ask why?... You may argue that there are secular Brahmins and priestly Brahmins and if the latter do not take up the cudgels on behalf of those who want to break Caste, the former will.... But in all this it is forgotten that the break up of the Caste system is bound to affect adversely the Brahmin Caste.... Is it reasonable to expect the secular Brahmins to take part in a movement directed against the priestly Brahmins? In my judgement, it is useless to make a distinction between the secular Brahmins and priestly Brahmins. Both are kith and kin.... Some of you will say that it is a matter of small concern whether the Brahmins come forward to lead the movement against Caste or whether they do not. To take this view is in my judgment to ignore the part played by the intellectual class in the community... In no country does the mass of the people live the life of intelligent thought and action. It is largely imitative and follows the intellectual class. There is no exaggeration in saying that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class.... You may think it a pity that the intellectual class in India is simply another name for the Brahmin caste. You may regret the two are one; that the existence of the intellectual class should be bound with one single caste, that this intellectual class should share the interest and the aspirations of that Brahmin caste, which has regarded itself the custodian of the interest of that caste, rather than of the interests of the country. All this may be very regrettable. But the fact remains, that the Brahmins form the intellectual class of the Hindus.... When such an intellectual class, which holds the rest of the community in its grip, is opposed to the reform of Caste, the chances of success in a movement for the break-up of the Caste system appear to me very, very remote" (This is a condensed quotation from Vol. 1, pp: 69-71).

(1) Who are 'intellectuals'?

The commonly understood meaning of the term 'intellectual' is a person with intelligence. Intelligence — concerning what? If we examine

this term thoroughly, it will become clear that intelligence is something connected with the labour that a person performs. When it refers to the skill connected with the labour, we should call a person an 'intellectual' if he or she has skill in labour and whether that labour is mental or manual. It follows that we may have to call a skilled carpenter an intellectual just as we call a skilled doctor an intellectual. But there is no such usage of the term in society.

True, that there is no need of skill for doing manual labour as we need to do mental labour. Yet the 'intellect' is not the sole property of mental labourers. But in this society, by and large only skill and expertise connected with mental labour is considered intelligence and intellect. Moreover, all those who do mental labour become the intellectual class!

Mental labours are those which teachers, doctors, scientists, engineers and such others do. These people know something about their respective subjects. But each one of them is confined to their respective sphere of activity only. Once they cross their sphere, none of them knows anything about other spheres. Yet all these people are 'intellectuals'.

Apart from those who pursue an occupation, we find some people working in the sphere of politics or social reform movements. Even these people know something, yet again only about the sphere in which they function. Yet all these people too are intellectuals.

There is some justification in the meaning that intellectuals are those who do mental labours. But, for Ambedkar, this meaning of intellectual is irrelevant. For him, only Brahmins are intellectuals! There are people who do mental labour in other upper castes. Yet none of them is an intellectual. He has not explained the basis for his determination of Brahmins as the only intellectuals.

If we take any problem in society, we find mutually opposite sides. Each side will have its own intellectuals. In the question of caste distinction the opposite sides are: upper castes and lower castes. Again each side will have its own intellectuals. The people of lower castes depend on the leadership of their intellectuals and not on the leadership of intellectuals belonging to the enemy class.

What happened in the case of struggle for Chawdar Tank? Did Brahmin intellectuals come forward and lead the movement? What happened in the Round Table Conferences? Did Brahmin intellectuals come and argue in favour of reservations for Dalits? Nowhere do we find Brahmin intellectuals in any of the programmes connected with Dalits. The upper caste intellectuals like Gandhi and Rajagopalachari worked against and not in favour of lower castes.

No doubt that leaders think in a somewhat systematic manner compared to the ordinary masses of people. In other words, those who can think systematically become 'leaders'. But this does not mean that people always remain as followers of the leaders and do not think intelligently. If people cannot think of 'struggle', there will not be any struggle at all.

Ambedkar thinks that any change in society depends on intellectuals, that is leaders. Well then, what is the role of ordinary people? For example, what would have happened if ordinary masses of people were not prepared for the struggle for Chawdar Tank and if there were only a couple of Dalit leaders? There wouldn't have been a meeting, a procession, and entry into the tank.

Did those people assemble there like sheep without any thinking on their own part at all and merely to follow the leaders? Don't the masses also think about their problems?

It is completely incorrect to separate people and their leaders in a movement. Leaders cannot exist without people. Leaders are also part of people. The interests of both people and leaders are identical. A 'movement' is a combination of both people and the leaders. There cannot be any movement or change if either of them is absent. Therefore, the view that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class is totally meaningless.

So far we have seen the first point of Ambedkar that annihilation of caste does not take place because Brahmins do not agree to it. Now let us see the second point, namely, 'no caste does not like to change'.

(2) Does any Caste not like the change?

Ambedkar says:

"the second reason, why I say the task is impossible, will be clear if you will bear in mind that the Caste system has two aspects. In one of its aspect, it divides men into separate communities. In its second aspect, it places these communities in a graded order one above the other in social status. Each caste takes its pride and its consolation in the fact that in the scale of castes it is above some other castes. As an outward mark of this gradation, there is also a gradation of social and religious rights technically spoken of an *Ashtadhikaras* and *Sanskaras*. The higher the grade of a caste, the greater the number of these rights and the lower the grade, the lesser their number. Now this gradation, this scaling of castes, makes it impossible to organise a common front against the Caste System" (Vol. 1, p. 72).

This second reason is easily understandable, isn't it? According to this, no caste likes the abolition of caste because each caste will have castes below it. Compared to those lower castes, a given caste will be at a higher status. If there were no caste system that caste would not enjoy higher status. Hence no caste agrees to the abolition of caste system.

How wonderful is this reasoning!

Let us suppose there are 4 castes called A, B, C and D.

Caste **A** is the highest. The other castes are graded one below the other. Caste **D** is the lowest.

Caste **A** may not agree to the abolition of the caste system and equality among all as it would lose its social status. But, why do the remaining castes not agree?

Caste **D** would agree totally. It is needless to explain why it agrees. As it is the lowest of all castes, it would be ready to get rid of its lowly position. Further, it is the same case with castes **B** and **C** as well.

Let us look at caste **B.** This is lower than **A** and higher than **C** and **D**. According to Ambedkar, **B** too would not like the abolition of the caste system because it is at a higher status than **C** and **D**. Ambedkar has simply mentioned this aspect and stopped at that point. Well, won't **B** gain anything by abolition of the caste system? Won't it become equal with **A,** which is higher in status? Won't it be relieved of the humiliation that it is lower than **A**? Will **B** not gain something even as it 'loses' something due to abolition of the caste system? Ambedkar's reasoning concerns only what is 'lost' and it does not concern with what is 'gained'.

Let us consider caste **C.** This is lower than **A** and **B** and higher than **D.**

Though **C** would lose something compared to **D**, it also gains something compared to **A** and **B**.

Therefore, of the four castes **A, B, C** and **D**, caste **A** may not like the abolition of caste but the remaining castes do not oppose it. This means, those who begin the movement for annihilation of caste should first depend not on the highest caste but on the remaining castes! Not on the Brahmins caste but on other castes! Exactly contrary to what Ambedkar says! One has to depend mainly on the lower castes.

Concerning the lower castes, Ambedkar says:

"The Untouchables... are a disunited body, they are infested with the caste system in which they believe as much as does the caste Hindu. This caste system among the Untouchables has given rise to mutual rivalry

> and jealousy and it has made common action impossible. The Mohemmedans have also a caste system among themselves... But their religion is a strong unifying force... In the absence of any unifying force, the Untouchables are just fragments with no cement to bind them and their numbers are therefore of no advantage to them" (Vol. 5, p. 266).

From this, it is clear that there are different castes even among untouchables and marriages do not take place between them. Yet the reason for the existence of 'rivalry' and 'jealousy' among untouchables and other lower castes is not the absence of religion that unifies them. Conditions of insecure livelihood and competition for work create 'rivalry' among them. People who do not have even slightly better living conditions will develop jealousy for those who possess them. All this is connected with the economic problem. If there occur necessary changes that give comfortable living and if they receive knowledge concerning the abolition of caste, all these castes will favour abolition of castes.

If we think like Ambedkar, the Brahmin caste alone may not change since it is the uppermost caste. It may remain like that. If the remaining castes change, that will be a very big change, indeed. If such a change takes place, it would be not possible for the Brahmin caste to remain unchanged. But Ambedkar's argument is different. According to him, Brahmins must change first. They are the intellectuals. They alone must initiate the abolition of caste. As they do not take that initiative any way, there is no way to annihilate caste. The Hindu religion has kept the caste system intact. We can not do anything to it. Its annihilation is most difficult! Impossible! This is what Ambedkar said through his essay *Annihilation of Caste*! But every problem has its own solution. The organizers of the movement have to find it. To Ambedkar, annihilation of caste has appeared to be the most difficult issue because he depended for its solution on the leadership of Brahmins and the reform of the Hindu religion. He opined that there should be only one authentic Hindu religious text devoid of caste distinctions by abolishing all the Hindu religious texts and Brahmins alone must take initiative for the annihilation of caste. As such things are not possible, annihilation of caste too appeared to be impossible.

Nothing comes in the way of inter-caste marriages even if we do not reform the Hindu religion according to Ambedkar's suggestion. For people with religious beliefs—however deep they may be—do not follow literally each and every saying of the religious texts. When other conditions favour them, they will be able to go for inter-caste marriages, disregarding religious customs.

By other conditions we mean living conditions that form due to education, occupation, jobs, economic situation etc. If the living conditions

of different castes are similar, there will be ways of the coming together of young men and women of different castes.

However strong the caste system may be, it does not mean that inter-caste marriages are not at all taking place. They have been taking place for a long time. But very rarely: one here and one there. That too, they happened between one upper caste and another.

After the introduction of 'reservations for lower castes', we may find some changes with reference to inter-caste marriages. They are: (1) The number of inter-caste marriages may have increased. (2) Now we may find marriages taking places not only between one upper caste and another but also between upper castes and lower castes.

The reason for the marriages between upper castes and lower castes is the entry of the lower castes into higher levels of education and employment through reservations.

When an untouchable youth receives education to some level and does a job connected with mental labour, a young woman belonging to an upper caste may get acquainted with him either during his studies or at the job, may become a friend and finally she may be prepared for an inter-caste marriage disregarding the caste distinctions. However, if that untouchable young man were a scavenger or a toilet cleaner, that upper caste girl would not like to marry him.

Even among the upper castes, marriages within the same caste take place between families of equal economic status and marital relations do not take place between a rich family and a poor family. The same thing applies to inter-caste marriages also.

In the inter-caste marriages that take place with the lower castes, the lower caste individuals—weather men or women—will be invariably educated and employed. In the case of women, we find education invariably even if they are not employed.

Nowhere do we find marriages of the individuals of upper castes with those of lower castes who perform the lowest manual labours and unclean labours.

Even in countries where there is no caste system, marital relations are not possible between people who do lowest manual labour and those who do mental labour. All these things will definitely be confirmed if we can collect information relating to inter-caste marriages on the following counts:

1. In the past, did inter-caste marriages in the past take place only among upper castes or between untouchables and upper castes also?

2. Are there instance of inter-caste marriages between young men and women who do scavenging work and the young men and women of upper castes?

3. Has the number of marriages between lower castes and upper castes increased after the development of education and employment of lower castes through reservation?

4. What is the situation of young men and women of lower castes in the inter-caste marriages that took place after reservations? Do they have education and jobs?

If we collect answers to these kinds of questions, we can see that inter-caste marriages became possible only when the living condition of young men and women of lower castes has improved.

What do we understand from this? The main prerequisite for frequent occurrence of inter-caste marriages is the development of living conditions of lower castes. This is an aspect linked with labour relations and division of labour that exist among all castes. This alone is the main issue. Without this, that is, while the lower caste population is confined only to the lowest manual labours and lives in dire poverty, marriage-relations between upper castes and lower castes will not be possible even if we prepare a single new Hindu religious text without reference to caste and put it in the hands of the upper castes. If we intensify religious reform what may happen at the most is that inter-caste marriages among upper castes will take place on a somewhat larger scale. But marital relations between upper and lower castes will not form by any religious reform.

In order to come out of any problem, the lower castes would have to concentrate their attention on their economic progress. That is, on the situation of 'exploitation of labour'! This is because the change that takes place in the life of lower castes even through reservations is very meager. That too for a very few people in those castes. Moreover, reservations are a temporary arrangement. If they are given up, the situation will again be as before.

Progress does not mean a change that is limited only to some people, to some extent and that too temporarily. It is a higher form of change that benefits (1) every one and (2) permanently. This is not possible through reservations.

Unless we follow a path that would achieve real progress, we cannot imagine inter-caste marriages occurring at a higher level of frequency than at present. If we do not follow such a path, annihilation of caste is really an impossible thing. But such impossibility is not due to what Ambedkar calls the lack of reform of the Hindu religion.

After explaining how 'annihilation of caste' is nearly impossible due to certain reasons, in 1936 Ambedkar declared that he was himself not going to continue in the Hindu religion:

> "...this would probably be my last address to a Hindu audience... I am sorry, I will not be with you. I have decided to change" (Vol.1, p. 78 & 80).

Having declared this, Ambedkar concluded his essay with a couple of paras.

Ambedkar, who declared thus in 1936, did not leave the Hindu religion until 20 years. He, however, made his declaration 20 years before! This is amazing!

Finally, neither hope nor solution for abolition of caste may be found in the essay *Annihilation of Caste*! There is no programme in it as to what the lower castes population should do! There is no other programme except that the lower-castes should think of the upper castes thus, 'It would be good if upper castes change! They don't change but it would be very nice if they did! It would be still better if the Brahmins change!'

But, why can't any leader of a movement who attempts at the annihilation of caste, offer a programme, for example as follows, to both lower and upper castes with certain minimum suggestions and activities?

➢ We must develop logical reasoning and rationalism in every aspect including in the matter of caste.

➢ Caste is an evil practice. We should refine ourselves so as to abandon it.

➢ The lower castes too observe hierarchy of castes. It is the same case even with untouchable castes! This means that lower castes' people are terribly harming themselves. Try to abandon this practice!

➢ In the name of 'inter-caste dining', invite people from other castes which are higher than yours for dinners to your house. Similarly go for dinners to the houses of those whose caste is lower than yours. In case they cannot afford to offer food to you, bear the entire expenditure yourselves!

➢ When you are expected to look for a marital relationship for one of your family members, think of individuals in the castes that are nearer to your castes. Especially, keep in view the castes that are lower than yours! Tell them that you are willing to have a marital relationship with them and discuss all things! Begin to reform yourselves by mixing with castes that are lower than yours. If you are not willing to mix with castes that

are lower than yours, it means that you are losing your eligibility to mix with castes higher than yours! Make yourself eligible to get rid of the evil practice of caste. Understand that it is in your hands.

➢ Do not object to the 'love marriages' which young men and women decide on their own! Generally, they have the nature of being 'inter-caste marriages'.

➢ Don't imitate the customs of upper castes with a hope to become their equals. For example, don't do things like wearing the so-called sacred thread, chanting of mantras, doing Sandhyavandan etc. Whichever caste practices them, they are useless to life and are meaningless acts. Try to understand that it is possible to get rid of caste distinctions only through inter-caste marriages and not by imitating the appearance and speech of upper castes! Don't try to derive pleasure by adding the word 'Brahmin' to the names of the lower castes and by changing your caste names into Sanskrit! Try to throw away the entire caste system.

➢ Stop admiring reformers like Vivekananda and Gandhi who are in circulation as Hindu religious reformers but who in fact did not at all want the welfare and progress of the lower castes. Do not insult yourselves with such practices as hanging their photographs at your houses and giving their names to your children.

➢ People of upper castes should learn this: Give up caste chauvinism! Acquire the minimum sense that 'all human beings are equal! Give up the meanness of demonstrating your castes by adding caste names at the end of your names! Show enthusiasm for dining in the houses of lower caste people! Start inter-caste marriages with other castes which are closer to you!

➢ Preach to people in every possible way through associations for annihilation of castes.

Why shouldn't Ambedkar, in his essay *Annihilation of Caste*, teach such things to at least lower castes people as to how they should behave in the matters of caste?

Well, what did that essay teach the lower castes people? What did it offer them? It gave them the impression that 'It was no use. Even the lower castes people do not change'. On the whole, it left all people of the lower castes to their ignorance!

We have seen before that the problem of caste is not simply an evil practice but is also *linked with poverty.*

Ambedkar did not leave the problem of poverty as well. He suggested a solution for it too. We shall now examine in detail what it is.

14 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, "PROTECTION AGAINST ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION"

Ambedkar made some proposals in a piece titled "Protection against Economic Exploitation" (Vol. 1, p. 391, 396 & 397). The meaning of these proposals is that there would be no economic exploitation if certain changes were made in society. However, he does not explain what economic exploitation means.

Unless they know what does economic exploitation mean, how will people know whether the suggested protective measures are correct or not? How will they evaluate them?

It appears that it is Ambedkar's opinion that an explanation of 'exploitation' is not required, that everybody knows about it. Either because of this understanding or any other reason, he has written only a single sentence about such an important issue. He has limited himself to very few suggestions with reference to the protective measures. Yet we have to try to understand his views based on these minimum suggestions.

While making suggestions, a dozen terms relating to economic issues roll out in this document. The terms include propertied class, masters, government, money, land, landlord, classes, rent, interest, debentures and wages. We do not find any explanation for any term. All are stray words. They remain isolated. The readers would understand these words in accordance with the views that they already hold. They will learn nothing new from these suggestions.

For example, what notion do people have about **interest**? When a person borrows some money or commodity as loan from another person, he has to give some more money than borrowed while repaying the debt. interest is the name of that excess amount of money!

Not only the person who receives interest but also the person who pays it too will have a positive opinion about interest. That is, an opinion which considers both paying interest and receiving interest as a fair transaction. All people know only this.

But what will the recipient of interest do with that money? He will buy products that are necessary for his subsistence. Which means, he is receiving those products as interest. That person is able to use products made by labour even without doing any labour himself. He would lend the principal amount again afresh as a loan and receive interest afresh again. The same thing happens again and again. He will always be receiving products as interest without doing labour at all. He thinks that he is earning them by a fair means.

According to the existing economics, interest is justified. But that economics itself is a big blunder! All notions formed accordingly are faulty. All relations that appear from its view point are faulty.

According to the correct meaning, interest is exploitation of labour. 'Economic exploitation' is its another name! This meaning forms on the basis of 'law of value'.

Value means **human labour**. Another name of 'value' is **money**. Whether you call it 'value' or 'money' it is labour only.

If a person receives some money in the name of interest, it means he has received some labour. But that labour is not his own labour. It is others' labour.

What does 'others' labour' mean? Is it the labour of those who paid interest? If the person who pays interest performs labour, then the interest which he pays will be part of his labour. Or if that person does not perform any labour, the interest which he pays will not be his labour. Such a person pays a certain portion of the **surplus value**, which he 'earns' from the labourers who work under him, as interest. In such contexts, it is not the labour of the person who paid the interest. It is the labour of his labourers. Whichever way we look at it, interest is the portion of value which does not go to those who do labour. It goes into the hands of the lender. That lender, without doing labour, lives on others' labour. That is by means of 'exploitation'.

Let us suppose the person who earns interest is also doing some labour. Also let us suppose that that person is earning 5 units of money through his own labour and 6 through interest. Here there is no problem with regard to 5 which comes from his own labour. No doubt that individuals should get the fruits of their respective labour. Here the question is concerning 6 that comes from interest. Interest is the income that comes from others' labour. If the income of an individual consists entirely of interest, then it means that he is living wholly on the exploitation of labour.

This means, an individual, an organisation or a bank that earns interest is engaged in exploitation of labour. If we consider the whole world, money

lenders, banks, finance companies and such other organisations, all these are exploiting labour.

What we have to grasp from this is that the term interest has two mutually conflicting meanings!

The first meaning: Interest is a justifiable income of an individual who lends money. This meaning has been in existence for ages.

The second meaning: Interest is part of exploitation of labour. Since nobody should possess the right to exploit others' labour, it follows that no person or no organisation should possess the right to receive interest. This is the meaning which Marxism gives.

Interest is not the only way of exploitation of labour. Land-rent and profit are also other ways of exploiting labour. These three are incomes unconnected with one's own labour. In addition to these, taxes paid to the government and unproductive expenses also come under this category of incomes in the sense that they are part of surplus value. These details are enough for this context.

Just as interest has two kinds of meanings, all the terms which Ambedkar mentioned have two kinds of meaning.

It is not simply some terms but the entire Economics itself will have two kinds of meanings. The first kind of Economics defends all the property rights and similar relations that are necessary to carry on exploitation of labour. This is **Capitalist Economics** or **Bourgeois Economics**. Opposed to this is the one which explains the concept of exploitation of labour and rejects the Bourgeois Economics. This is the **Marxist Economics** or **Communistic Economics**.

Concerning the elimination of exploitation of labour and achieving equality, Marxist economics suggests mainly 3 changes.

1) Every person both men and women must perform labour. Their labour should be the source of their livelihood.

2) We should abolish such sources of income as rents, interest and profit and also the exploitative property rights that fetch these sources of income.

3) We should abolish the **exploitative division of labour** according to which a person always performs a manual labour while another person always performs a mental labour. We must establish a **new division of labour** according to which all men and women both perform certain manual and mental labour.

Only if these changes take place will the exploitative relations of labour change into **equal relations of labour**. This means, exploitative society will form into a society with a new character.

Those who have only a half-baked knowledge of Marxism consider it as something that concerns only relations between workers and capitalists, not of other sections of population including women. But this is utterly wrong.

If we take any period in history since the days of slave society, we will find society split into many classes and sub-classes. But all those classes/sub-classes boil down essentially to 2 classes only: the class that performs labour and the class that does not perform labour. Though there is a third class that depends partly on its own labour and partly on exploitation, we may classify some sub-classes under the class of labourers and some others under the class of non-labourers. On the whole, we may classify the entire population—men, women, young and old—will come under these 2 classes only. Reference to these 2 classes implies the entire society.

When we use the term **masters,** all the members of their families come under that term. When we use the term **labourers**, all the members of their families come under that term. The two constitute virtually the whole society.

Different kinds of labour relations, namely, productive labour, unproductive labour and family labour, are intertwined among the entire population of society.

Men and women, young and old, everyone belongs to some class and some group in a given class. The place a person occupies in the labour relations and the source of income for his subsistence determine his class and group position.

Beggars, people in the prisons, inmates in the orphanages, people in religious institutions, prostitutes, rowdies and so on belong to some class depending on the source of their livelihood. In these examples, except those who live in religious institutions, all people belong to the labouring class. Though prostitutes live by their occupation, prostitution cannot be called labour. Prostitutes are not labourers. Similarly, rowdies are also not labourers.

If we understand all these labour relations, it will be clear that Marxism has talked about the entire population in society.

How can readers understand the concept of 'economic exploitation' unless one explains such economic phenomena as interest, profit and rent?

If they do not know the 'truth', they will understand things only in accordance with the ideas that they had already formed in the past.

Ambedkar has used the term 'economic exploitation', was he not? It is doubtful if he has used the term in the sense of 'exploitation of labour'. Does he defend or oppose rent, interest and profits? We find answers to these doubts when we see the protective measures which he suggested.

All the demands concerning reservations which Ambedkar put forward in the Round Table Conference of 1930 were meant only for untouchables. Reservations were merely a temporary arrangement. But the protective measures that we look at now are not meant only for untouchables but also for all the poor people. Further these are not temporary but permanent. These are meant to change permanently all the spheres of life. This means, Ambedkar has suggested not only temporary solution but also permanent solution.

Before elaborating these safeguards, Ambedkar clarified that they were meant

> "to remove social, political and economic inequality by providing better opportunities to the submerged classes" (Vol. 1, p. 387).

Social inequalities means caste distinctions: upper vs. lower castes.

Economic inequalities imply that some are rich and some are poor.

Political inequalities imply that the rich people have access to the administrative positions while poor do not have access.

The aim of these safeguards is to eliminate all these inequalities. That is, briefly speaking, these safeguards are aimed at establishing caste-less and classless society.

Ambedkar proposed these safeguards in March 1947. He wished that the government of India should implement them after India became independent.

Now let us look at Ambedkar's proposals concerning Protection against Economic Exploitation:

> "The United States of India shall declare as a part of the law of the constitution—(1) That industries which are key industries or which may be declared to be key industries shall be owned and run by the State; (2) That industries which are not key industries but which are run by the State or by Corporations established by the State; (3) The Insurance shall be a monopoly of the State and that the State shall compel every adult citizen to take out a life insurance policy commensurate with his

wages as may be prescribed by the Legislature; (4) That agriculture shall be State Industry; (5) That State shall acquire the subsisting rights in such industries, insurance and agricultural land held by private individuals, whether as owners, tenants or mortgages and pay them compensation in the form of debenture equal to the value of his or her right in the land. Provided that in reckoning the value of land, plant or security no account shall be taken of any rise therein due to emergency, of any potential or unearned value or any value for compulsory acquition; (6) The State shall determine how and when the debenture holder shall be entitled to claim cash payment; (7) The debenture shall be transferable and inheritable property but neither the debenture holder nor the transferee from the original holder nor his heir shall be entitled to claim the return of the land or interest in any industrial concern acquired by the State or be entitled to deal with it in any way; (8) The debenture-holder shall be entitled to interest on his debenture at such rate as may be defined by law, to be paid by the State in cash or in kind as the State may deem fit; (9) Agricultural industry shall be organized on the following basis: (i) The State shall divide the land acquired into farms of standstill size and let out the farms for cultivation to residents of the village as tenants (made up of group of families) to cultivate on the following conditions: (a) The farm shall be cultivated as a collective farm; (b) The farm shall be cultivated in accordance with rules and directions issued by Government; (c) The tenants shall share among themselves in the manner prescribed the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges properly leviable on the farm; (ii) The land shall be let out to villagers without distinction of caste or creed and in such manner that there will be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourers; (iii) It shall be the obligation of the State to finance the cultivation of the collective farms by the supply of water, draft animals, implements, manure, seeds, etc.; (iv) The State shall be entitled to—(a) to levy the following charges on the produce of the farm; (i) a portion for land revenue; (ii) a portion to pay the debenture-holders; and (iii) a portion to pay for the use of capital goods supplied; and (b) to prescribe penalties against tenants who break the conditions of tenancy or willfully neglect to make the best use of the means of cultivation offered by the State or otherwise act prejudicially to the scheme of collective farming; (10) The scheme shall be brought into operation as early as possible but in no case shall the period extend beyond the tenth year from the date of the Constitution coming into operation" (Vol. 1, pp: 396-7).

If these safeguards against economic exploitation, interest, rent and right to private property are intact as before. The only change proposed here is that the State becomes the single owner in the place of private owners.

According to these proposals, what the State should do is this: It should purchase all the lands under the possession of landlords by paying compensation and take them under its possession. Similarly, it must purchase all the industries of the capitalists by paying compensation and take them under its possession. Also it must pay the equivalent value to shares and securities.

The question that immediately arises is: why should the State pay 'compensation' for lands and industries? To say that the State has to pay compensation for the properties amounts to accepting the contention that land is indeed the property of landlords and capital is the property of capitalists! Well, if you accept that properties belong to owners, then what is the meaning of economic exploitation?

Land cannot be the private property of any individual. It exists in nature. No human being has made it out of his/her labour. It existed even before human beings came into existence. Hence it is nobody's private property. Human beings have the right only to do labour on the land. Even that right is not meant to occupy land as a permanent private property or to rent it out to others. The system of occupying land as private property came into practice only in order to enable some to live without doing any labour. The person who occupies land will become its master. He lets it for rent to those who do not have land. The Master takes some portion of the crop from the land as his right for rent and thus lives on the rent without doing any labour. What the slaves and feudal peasants did for the sake of slave masters and feudal lords respectively was nothing but sacrificing their 'surplus labour'. It is the same thing which workers do under capitalism. The surplus labour of workers splits into many parts and it feeds the class that does not do any labour.

Therefore, in order to prevent others from exploiting their labour, labouring people should not treat the property rights of the owners as legitimate rights. They should not care for the property right of the landlord who receives rent. As land is part of nature and does not belong to the landlord, they need not pay any compensation to him. Just as labourers do, a landlord and his family too must live on their own labour performed on some land. Then the term 'rent' will disappear.

Similarly the working class need not pay compensation to the capitalists because **capital** is not the fruit of the labour of the capitalists. It accumulated as a result of surplus value which the working class has been giving continually for many generations.

For these reasons, the labouring class can confiscate properties without paying a single paisa as compensation for lands or industries.

But this is not what Ambedkar proposes. According to him, lands are the property of landlords and capital is the property of capitalists. Hence, we must pay money for them. We have to pay the value of the property without causing any loss to the property owners!

Well, what sort of change it would be if we pay compensation to the property owners? When the land is in the possession of the landlord, he rents it out and his family lives on the labour of others who pay rent. Or, instead of land if the landlord possess money which he gets by selling the land, his family would still live on the labour of others because he gets interest on this money. If the State does not pay money immediately after it buys the land of the landlord, it would give him a paper of equivalent value called **debenture**. The State pays interest every year on that debenture. Ambedkar's ninth point identifies the source from which the State should pay interest. We will examine that point later.

What change occurs when the landlord sells his land to the State? He lives on rent when he possessed land and he would live on interest when he possess money instead of land. What is the difference between the two? Nothing. Both are same. Both imply exploitation of labour. The property in land is turned into property in money. This means that family did not really lose its property. It retained its property. Only the form of property has changed.

If a family possesses land, the rent will never stop coming.

If a family possess money, instead of land, interest too will never stop coming. This means, the family of owners will never have any need to do labour. If we confiscate land from the landlord without compensation, it is not possible for the landlord to earn either rent or money. This means, there won't be any scope to live by exploitation. Then landlord too will, then, have to depend on his own labour.

Paying compensation means changing the form of property instead of abolishing exploitative property right. It is the same case with the question of property rights of capitalists as well. If they receive debentures equivalent to the value of their property and get interest on the debentures, it only means that the form of the property has changed. Owing to this the property owners will not lose any thing. They will never face the risk of doing labour for themselves.

Debenture is a paper that guarantees livelihood without doing any labour. Mr. Ambedkar is handling over these papers respectfully to property owners! Moreover, he is assuring them that rights over these debentures are 'inheritable' for any number of generations. This means, Ambedkar Sahib is permitting landlords and capitalists to metamorphocize into a class

of debenture-holders and enjoy interest for generations and live happily without doing any labour until the sun and the moon disappear from the universe!

The State should pay money after purchasing lands of the landlords and industries of capitalists, should it not? Then, why did Ambedkar suggest that the 'State should give debentures', instead of money'? He has not given any reason for this. What appears outwardly is that the State would not possess enough money to purchase all the properties in society. Taxes alone constitute the income of the State. They constitute only a portion of the annual mass of production. The State has to spend these taxes unproductively on legislatures, government offices, police, military etc. It would never happen so that some balance remains after all the expenditure and the State pays that balance to the landlords and capitalists. Hence Ambedkar meant that the State should buy properties on credit basis without paying money and pay only interest every year. Which means, it would never be possible to pay the principal amount. The heirs of those properties of land and industries can surely receive interest from the State for any number of generations.

But the actual and correct reason for the inability of the State to pay money for the purchased properties is different. We can understand it only if we know the concept of value.

'Value of land' will be as follows: Land is not made of human labour. The **raw land** that existed in nature had no value. Suppose a person pays some money to buy such raw land and then cultivates it, raises a crop, sells it and gets back the money he spent on buying the land. It appears as though he got back from the land the money which he spent on buying the land. But it is not true. Since land has no value at all, the money that he got from the crop is not something that came from the land. There is no connection between money and land. The money paid for the land is part of surplus value of those people who performed labour in that land.

Conversion of a piece of 'raw land' into a form that facilitates cultivation or other need involves expenditure of some labour. Raw land will change into another form. As some amount of labour is necessary for such conversion, the land acquires some value due to the expenditure of labour. If some one purchases the land by paying that expended value alone, it would be possible for the owner to get back that value through the land. If some one purchases the land by paying more value than what is expended, it is not possible to get back that excess value through the land. If some one pays value which the land really does not have, then it is possible to pay that value only from the surplus value of those who performed labour on the land.

The summary of the whole thing is that the total money available in society does not include any part connected with the value of the raw land. All that is called money concerns with labour only. Just because land does not have value, the State won't find money to pay for the lands that it purchases. Hence it is not possible for the State to pay that money. This appears outwardly as if the State does not have so much money.

Regarding **capital**: capital means a collection of some articles. All the articles are made by labour and will have value. Which means capital will have value. Whenever the capitalist sells products made with capital, the entire expended value of capital keeps returning.

Though capital has value, it is not possible for the State to pay the values of industries which it purchased from capitalists. This is because the State should possess capital if it wants to run those industries. If the State gives away money to the capitalists, it has to borrow that money from the capitalists in order to run those industries under its auspices. Whether it pays off money, borrows the same money on credit, and pays interest; or it does not initially pay money but pays interest on the amount which it did not pay initially both are the same.

Well then how should the State pay interest on its debts? Point 9 of Ambedkar's safeguards indicates as to how to distribute products annually. We have to see this point.

The State purchases the entire land in village on credit and rents to villagers either individually or collectively. Crops grow in that land. How to distribute them?

There are two ways to do this. That crop may get distributed in one way under the system based on exploitation or in another way under the system where there is no exploitation.

In the system without exploitation: After deducting the entire expenditure on means of production required for raising the crop, the remaining belongs to those who performed the labour to raise the crop. They need not pay any rent, interest and profit out of the amount that they get. If the State is opposed to exploitation, people have to pay some portion of the crop toward taxes since it is the their responsibility to run the State. If it is not the State of the people, however, it amounts to losing their labour when they pay taxes.

According to Ambedkar, the distribution of the crop should be as follows: (1) since it is the State that incurs expenditure necessary for cultivating the land, we have to first take out that amount. This is correct and we have to pay all the expenditure to the State. This amount will serve as new expenditure at the time of next cultivation. (2) Next, we have to

pay some portion of that crop toward interest on debentures of the landlords. This is what we pay in lieu of the property right which the landlord possesses. Whether we paid rent in the past or pay interest now, both mean the same. This is exploitation of labour. Ambedkar is defending this. (3) Thereafter, we have to pay taxes to the State. Since this State defends the exploitative property rights, the entire expenditure that sustains the State is part of the surplus value (that is exploitation of labour). (4) The State which invests in the cultivation of the land does not satisfy itself by merely taking back the invested capital. It must also get profit on its capital. We have to pay that profit from the crop itself. But Ambedkar did not say that 'we have to pay profit too to the State'. He simply said that we have to give back its capital and pay taxes. We can imagine that the taxes will be at such a level that they include profit as well. This we can imagine because here we find the defense of property rights. (5) The labouring population have to distribute only that crop which remains after all other payments. When they distribute it so, it would be equivalent to wage. Here the surplus value consists of interest on debentures of the landlords and the taxes to the State. The taxes themselves include profit on the capital which the State invested.

Same is the case with industries: In a given industry, we have to take out from the production all the expenses connected with the means of production. This is correct. Next, we need to pay interest on debenture of the capitalist. It is the same thing whether the capitalist got profit or interest on capital. The interest that goes to the capitalist will also include interest that goes to the landlord for his land-rights. Next come taxes payable to the State. They may also include profit on the capital which the State invested. After all these deductions, the labourers of the industry will have to distribute the remaining amount. It will be merely a 'wage' for them.

The third point in Ambedkar's proposals says that the State shall compel every adult citizen to take out a life insurance policy commensurate with his wages. But **wage** is the labourer's income that a labouring person gets. The label 'wage' does not apply to the class which gets interest on debentures without doing any labour.

Ambedkar's proposals do not include, however, the condition that every adult citizen must do labour. Without such a condition, how do wages and life insurance 'commensurating with wages' apply to each individual?

For the sake of argument, let us assume that even the debenture-holder performs some labour and Ambedkar also assumes this. One may, then, argue as follows: Ambedkar said that every adult citizen should take life

insurance with his wages, didn't he? How can a person get wage without doing any labour? Doesn't this mean that Ambedkar had to imply that every person should do labour?

Are we expected here to interpret Ambedkar's words (that every adult citizen should take insurance policy commensurate with his wages) in our own way even when he does not express an important point explicitly?

Fine, let us believe that Ambedkar did imply that every person should do labour. Do you know what will happen then? Debenture-holders will have two kinds of income. (1) Wage (2) Interest on debenture. Wage is in return for the labour performed while interest in return for the labour **not** performed! Interest is merely toward the 'property right'. It comes from the surplus value of the other labourers who do labour along with the debenture-holders! That's it! Here what we really need to grasp is this: even if every person performs labour that is not enough in order to eliminate exploitation. It is imperative to abolish property rights which the propertied class has been enjoying for so long! If this does not happen and if exploitative property rights remain intact, the propertied class will continue to receive exploitative income even if they begin to do labour.

All the capitalists keep claiming that they too work very hard. If they take wage for that hardship, it is reasonable. But they get not only wage but also profit and interest. The whole problem, however, concerns incomes unconnected with labour.

If there were no exploitative property rights, there would neither be debentures nor interest. The question of exploitation itself would not arise, then. Then every one will be a human being living on his own labour and not by exploitative income.

But Ambedkar's proposals do not include the condition that former property owners should no longer possess property rights in the new scheme. Moreover, there is a condition that they should possess those rights! That too inheritable! Permanently! For generations!

This means that Ambedkar's scheme includes exploitative sources of income as before! The class that consumes such income also remains.

Ambedkar's proposal begins with the term 'economic exploitation'. On the one hand he speaks of exploitation and on the other hand he defends income that comes without doing any labour! When we examine all this, we experience a doubt concerning Ambedkar's understanding of economic issues.

Should we think that though Ambedkar has used the term exploitation, he in fact does not know anything about it? Or should we think that he knows everything and yet he defended exploitation knowingly?

The first of these interpretations appears to be the correct one. People who do not know anything about exploitation too recite the term 'exploitation'! In the same manner, it appears that, Ambedkar too does not know at all anything about 'exploitation of labour'. Nowhere has he used terms like 'class that performs labour' and 'class that does not perform labour'. Nowhere has he expressed his opposition to or criticism of exploitative sources of income such as rent, interest and profit. His entire understanding of economic issues is capitalistic. But capitalists do not use the term economic exploitation. They do not acknowledge the existence of exploitation, whereas Ambedkar spoke of exploitation. But he defended exploitation.

In Ambedkar's scheme, there is no place for the struggle which the labouring class needs to wage in order to come out of exploitation. All the changes take place through the existing State in its legislative assemblies.

In Ambedkar's view, the State is an institution above all classes. It rules and treats the entire population equally. Hence it buys all properties from private owners. By paying inheritable interest to the class of property owners and wages to the class of labourers, the State treats the two classes equally and thus rules nicely!

In Ambedkar's view the legislature is a place of great struggle, its members are not like statues in a museum. Here they achieve rights by waging struggles and thus it is such a great place. He tells:

> "A Legislative Council is more than a museum, it is a place where, for instance, social battles have to be fought, privileges have to be destroyed, and rights have to be won" (Vol. 2, p. 471).

The entire struggle which the poor people wage involves nothing more than sending representatives to the legislature. Those representatives will wage struggles by means of new laws. It will be a great struggle if they make a law to buy properties of the private owners. It will amount to winning rights which they did nor possess earlier.

What does elimination of privileges mean? This means it is a struggle that makes all people equal in such a way that none will have special privileges. This equality consists of paying interest to debenture-holders until the earth itself disappears and continue paying wages to the labourers! This is equality according to Ambedkar! This is what elimination of special privileges means!

1) Ambedkar's 'State Socialism'!

Ambedkar mentioned the term 'State Socialism' many a time while discussing property relations.

> "The main purpose behind the clause is to put an obligation on the State to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth. The plan set out in the clause proposes State ownership in agriculture with a collectivised method of cultivation and a modified form of State Socialism in the field of industry. It places squarely on the shoulders of the State the obligation to supply capital necessary for agriculture as well as industry" (Vol. 1, p. 408).

There is no explanation of such questions as these: what is Socialism? What is State Socialism? The only meaning that appears here is that State Socialism means control of all properties by the State.

At least some people know that Socialism means equality. People who speak of equality must oppose relations of exploitation even if they do not know what equality actually means in every sense. The fundamental condition for equality is that everyone must perform labour. But there is no reference to labour in Ambedkar's conception of equality. He referred to equality and State Socialism in terms of State's control of all property. The question here is whether property should be under the control of private owners or the State? Here there is no understanding that it is the same thing whether property is under private control or State control unless we eliminate exploitation and establish new relations.

Ambedkar suggests 'to plan the economic life on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity'. What is the 'highest point'? If we consider some point as the highest point, what sort of point would it be if some more improvement takes place in productivity?

Ambedkar further says about State Socialism:

> "State Socialism is essential for the rapid industrialization of India. Private enterprise cannot do it and if it did it would produce those inequalities of wealth which private capitalism has produced in Europe and which should be a warning to Indians" (Vol. 1, p. 408).

Does this mean that if the private capitalism produces inequalities in wealth, Ambedkar's State Socialism will establish equality in wealth: equality between debenture-holders who do not perform labour and labourers who lose their surplus value?

Emphasizing the need for collective farms, Ambedkar says,

"Consolidation of Holdings and Tenancy Legislation are worse than useless. They cannot bring about prosperity in agriculture. Neither Consolidation nor Tenancy Legislation can be of any help to the 60 millions of Untouchables who are just landless labourers. Neither Consolidation nor Tenancy Legislation can solve their problem. Only collective farms on the lines set out in the proposal can help them. There is no expropriation of the interests concerned" (Vol. 1, p. 408).

Similar questions arise on this issue as well. How do collective farms help untouchables when you convert the landed property of landlords into money and give the same landlords the control over that money? What is the use of collective farms if the former landlords receive interest without performing any labour? What is the way to help the sixty million untouchables who are landless agricultural labourers? Is it to hand over the surplus value which they produce in collective farms to the debenture-holders?

2) What is the difference between Gandhi and Ambedkar concerning 'Property'?

Ambedkar seriously criticised Gandhi with reference to the question of property relations, that Gandhi is not on the side of labourers, and so on. But both Ambedkar and Gandhi are alike on the question of property. The only difference between the two is in their words!

Gandhi does not like class struggle between tenant farmers and landlords and between owners and labourers. It is the same case with Ambedkar. Even according to Ambedkar, there is no struggle that the labouring class wages.

During the peasant movement of 1921 in Uttar Pradesh, the tenant farmers stopped paying rent to the Zamindars (landlords). They stopped fetching water for the landlords. They even stopped services like hair cutting. This revolt worried Gandhi, who described these acts of revolt as acts of 'violence'! He said that peasants should not resort to violence, that they were obliged to pay rent to the landlords and that they should conduct a friendly discussion on the subject with the Zamindars (Vol.9, p. 282).

Finding fault with Gandhi on this episode, Ambedkar says:

"Mr. Gandhi does not want to hurt the propertied class. He is even opposed to a campaign against them. He has no passion for economic equality....His solution for the economic conflict between the owners and workers, between the rich and the poor, between landlords and tenants

and between the employers and the employees is very simple. The owners need not deprive themselves of their property. All that they need to do is to declare themselves Trustees for the poor. Of course the Trust is to be a voluntary..." (Vol. 9, p. 282).

There is nothing surprising in Gandhi's words; indeed it would have been surprising if Gandhi had not talked so about the propertied class. Well, then, what did Ambedkar say about the same class? Did Ambedkar speak of the propertied class differently from Gandhi in 1947, much later after he found fault with Gandhi and after he had himself grown in age and experience and had many opportunities to improve his understanding? What is the difference between Gandhi's advice that peasants should pay rent to the Zamindars and Ambedkar's proposals that peasants should pay interest to the debenture-holders (formerly landlords)? Ambedkar says that Gandhi's solution is very simple in the sense that the propertied class need not deprive themselves of their property. Well, then, is Ambedkar's proposal so tough that the propertied class should have to give up their property?

True, what Gandhi said is not 'economic equality'. But does Ambedkar's proposal constitute economic equality? It is also true that Gandhi does not wish to hurt the propertied class. Well, does Ambedkar wish to hurt the propertied class? Does conversion of property into money amount to hurting the propertied class?

Ambedkar cited a context in which Gandhi in fact found fault with the labourers. These are Gandhi's words:

> "Should the labourers obtain an increment in their wages by violence? Even if that be possible, they cannot resort to anything like violence, howsoever legitimate may be their claims. To use violence for securing rights may seem an easy path, but it proves to be thorny in the long run... The labourer does not trust the capitalist and the capitalist has no faith in the labourers... But when labour comes fully to realise its strength, I know it can become more tyrannical than capital" (Vol. 9, pp: 279-80).

What should a person, who wants to criticise Gandhi, say? He should say that it is not violence to go on strike for a wage rise. He should also say that 'labourers and capitalists do not trust each other because they are totally antagonist classes'. But Ambedkar himself did not give these kinds of answers. On the contrary, he gave reasons for the inability of labourers to become owners:

> "The mill owners will have to work on the terms dictated by labourers, if the latter could command intelligence of the former. It is clear, however, that labour will never attain to that intelligence. If it does, labour will

> cease to be labour and become itself the master. The capitalists do not fight on the strength of money alone. They do possess intelligence and tact" (Vol. 9, p. 280).

The capitalist intellectuals have always been singing the song that capitalists run their industries with intelligence and business acumen by which they get profits and not by exploitation of labour. Ambedkar's understanding too has the same tune. He says that labourers would become masters if they had intelligence. Will those masters-turned labourers not themselves need labourers to work for them? This means, unintelligent people will become their labourers! Ambedkar's words imply that all intelligent people become masters and all stupid people remain labourers.

But it is not intelligence or tact that is needed to become masters; it is the exploitative property rights that are needed! Those who have property rights over lands and other means of production will alone become masters!

It is not intelligence that is required to retain those rights but weapons! The class of masters is able to sustain itself by means of strength of weapons.

For Ambedkar, possessing intelligence means becoming masters. Ambedkar does not have the understanding that 'there should not be any masterhood in human relations at all'. The presence of masterhood implies the presence of labourhood or servitude. This means there is no equality. But Ambedkar is not concerned with it. Ambedkar's series of questions against Gandhi proceed as follows:

> "Is there anything new in the Gandhian analysis of economic ills? Are the economics of Gandhism sound? What hope does Gandhism hold out to the common man, to the down-and out? Does it promise him a better life, a life of joy, and culture, a life of freedom, not merely freedom from want but freedom to rise, to grow to the full stature which his capacities can reach?" (Vol. 9, p. 282).

Will each one of these questions not apply to Ambedkar himself? True, there is nothing new in Gandhi's analysis; but is there anything new in Ambedkar's analysis? True, Gandhi's economics is not sound. Well, then, is economics of Ambedkar sound? Why should we not confront Ambedkar with each question which he raised against Gandhi?

Let Ambedkar crititicise Gandhi in any number of ways, both are essentially the same in respect of property relations. Both are favourable to the propertied-class, both their economics is the same. But Gandhi defends the old economics as it is without any change and without uttering the word exploitation. It is very easy to understand him. However

Ambedkar's proposals are confusing! The confusion consists in uttering the word 'exploitation' on the one hand and defending it on the other hand!

We have yet to see some more points in his scheme of safeguards. His proposals are meant not only to remove economic inequalities but also social inequalities; that is to remove caste distinctions. Point 9 of his proposals indicates how it helps the removal of caste distinctions. It suggests that the land be let out to villagers without distinction of caste or creed and in such manner that there will be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourer. If this is done, the lower castes people too will get the land equally with the upper castes people. As a result, their economic condition will improve. Also it will lead to their entry into the political sphere. Thus, according to Ambedkar, all kinds of inequalities will vanish by following his proposals. It was inevitable for him to suggest the same solution which he himself opposed whenever others proposed it, namely, that all the problems of lower castes are linked with the problem of poverty and the solution to the caste system too should proceed along the path of economic relations. He did not simply stop at suggesting inter-caste marriage as a solution to remove caste distinctions. He had to go to land and industry! That is, to the question of means of production and relations of production. It is a different issue whether Ambedkar suggested the solution correctly or wrongly. But he too had to suggest the same path. This means it proves that to solve the problems of any kind of inequality, one has to change economic relations along the path of equality.

But it is explicitly evident that Ambedkar's scheme, which retains the propertied class permanently, does not yield economic equality. The path that does not lead to economic equality will not lead to other kinds of equality either. This means, Ambedkar's scheme retains all inequalities as they stand.

If we really want protection against economic exploitation, we need correct plan instead of wrong plan. We need a plan that will make every individual do labour, abolish exploitative property rights and transform exploitative division of labour. In other words, we need Marx's plan instead of Ambedkar's plan.

Marx's plan improves the economic conditions of lower castes permanently. It also changes the present situation in which the lower castes are devoted to the lowliest manual and unclean labour. Such changes will facilitate inter-caste marriages as a common practice. Gradually it dismantles the caste distinctions. To accomplish all this, we need class struggle against exploitation of labour as Marx suggests and not the struggle in the legislature as Ambedkar suggests.

But Ambedkar has lot of opposition to Marxism. This we will see later. Ambedkar does not like to treat the propertied class 'harshly' unlike Marxism. At the same time, Ambedkar also knows pretty well that the labouring class would not like if he defends 'property' wholly in its classical form as Gandhi does. Therefore he has to discover a new path 'without letting the snake die and the stick break'! It is a new path which Ambedkar alone can discover! The result of his search is buying off properties with money! It is the path of struggle against exploitation by means of debentures!

It is Ambedkar's belief that he could be able to show to the poor people a beautiful path that is not Marxism! But Ambedkar's path—let it not be revolution—it is not even a 'petty reform'. It is simply status quo-ism in disguise! In other words, Ambedkar's safeguards were not meant for the protection of the poor but for the protection of exploiters!

If Gandhi, in some moment of enthusiasm, speaks radically, Ambedkar ridicules him a lot.

> "Mr. Gandhi sometimes speaks on social and economic subjects as though he was a blushing Red. Those who will study Gandhism will not be deceived by the occasional aberrations of Mr. Gandhi in favour of democracy and against capitalism. For Gandhism is in no sense a revolutionary creed" (Vol. 9, p. 290).

Says Ambedkar as if his 'ism' is a revolutionary creed!

Ambedkar too would like to become 'Red' once in a while. But suddenly he stifles his enthusiasm (perhaps. he is reminded of the risk involved in becoming Red!) and satisfies himself with 'State Socialism'.

'Socialism'! The term itself is a revolutionary force! All intellectuals know that the word attracts all the poor people. Even those whose theories do not at all agree with Socialism try to stick the word—abandoning its original sense—to their theories. Ambedkar's State Socialism too is akin to such theories. Socialism in the company of property rights, debentures and interest!

3) The 'Ideal Society' that Ambedkar cherishes!

It seems that Ambedkar's confidence in his own proposals concerning protection against economic exploitation gradually declined. Hence without mentioning those proposals, he began to say that Buddhism alone is the path of liberation for the entire humankind.

In his essay *Annihilation of Caste*, he explained what an ideal society means:

> "What is your ideal society if you do not want caste is a question that is bound to be asked... If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*. And why not?" (Vol. 1, p.57).

In his essay *Buddha or Karl Marx?* (Vol. 3), Ambedkar argues that an ideal society is possible only through Buddhism and not through Marxism. He explained what 'Buddhism' is in his book *Buddha and His Dhamma* which constitutes volume 11 running to about 600 pages. So hereafter we need to begin to examine Buddhism as Ambedkar depicted. First we need to know this since Ambedkar is proposing it as the path of liberation for lower castes and poor people. Later, we need to examine his essay that compared Buddhism and Marxism. If we do this job, we will be able to locate the path to an Ideal society. Such a path is, surely, necessary not only to India but also to any country where human beings live, isn't it?

15 ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR, WHAT IS 'BUDDHISM'?

Ambedkar gave an account of Buddha's life in his essays *Reformers and their Fate* (in Vol. 3) and *Who were Untouchables?* (in Vol. 7) and also in his book *Buddha and His Dhamma* (the whole of volume 11). He did not mention the books on which he based his account. In his introduction to Vol. 11, he said,

> "Depending on the Nikayas, not only the presentation of a consistent story of the life of the Buddha becomes a difficult thing and the presentation of some parts of his teachings becomes much more so" (Vol.11, Intro.).

Regarding Ambedkar's source for Buddha's life, excepting this single sentence, we don't find a single word extra. It is clear in many contexts that Ambedkar narrated the story of Buddha in his own way and with his own comments. In his 'Introduction', he mentioned certain popular notions with which he disagreed and gave his own interpretations in the main text. For example, the popular explanation regarding the question 'why did Buddha take Parivraja (remunciation)?' was not acceptable to Ambedkar and hence he gave another explanation. Similarly, he explained certain other things merely accounting his understanding.

As Buddha's story relates to a time 2,500 years ago, there is no concrete evidence for any event in it. There is no scope to treat it as a concrete historical fact when we read that Buddha said such and such. It might be what Buddha himself said or what others created. In his Introduction, Ambedkar too put a question as follows:

> "Do they form part of the original gospel or are they a later accretion by the monks?"

[All the quotations given in this chapter are, unless specifically mentioned, are from volume 11 and hence only page numbers are given in brackets after every quotation].

This is a narration which passed from one generation to another. Like other religions, here also anybody can give them any interpretation. Ambedkar too did the same thing. But in whatever manner one may change their narration, there won't be much difference in the essence of the story. What is important for us is, what is the theory that appears under the name Buddha Dharma or Buddhism?

Now let us go into the story.

1) According to Ambedkar, **Buddha's birth and renunciation**

This story relates to the 6th century B.C. There was a non-monarchial subsidiary state called Sakya in the Northern India. Kapilavastu was its capital city. Suddhodana was the king. Just like any other king, Suddhodana too was a wealthy person.

> "The lands he held were very extensive and the retinue under him was very large. He employed, it is said, one thousand ploughs to till the land he owned. He lived quite luxurious life and had many palaces" (p.2).

He had two wives, Mahamaya and Mahaprajapati. Buddha was Mahamaya's son. His original name was Siddharth Gautama.

According to the information which Ambedkar put before his readers, the narration of Buddha's birth begins as follows: in the month of Ashad on the seven-day of midsummer festival,

> "she [Mahamaya] rose early, bathed in scented water, bestowed a gift of 4,00,000 pieces of money as alms, adorned herself with all precious ornaments, ate choicest food, took upon herself the fast-day vows, and entered the splendidly adorned royal bedchamber to sleep. That night Suddhodana and Mahamaya came together and Mahamaya conceived" (p.3).

Why is this information that on that night Suddhodana and Mahamaya came together and Mahamaya conceived? Will the readers be confused as to how women conceive if this information is not given? Won't Buddha's birth be wonderful unless Ambedkar begins to narrate what happened in that night?

> "Lying on the royal bed she fell asleep. While asleep she had a dream. In her dreams she saw that the four world-guardians raised her as she was sleeping on her bed and carried her to the tableland of the Himalayas, placed her under a great sal tree and stood on one side. The wives of the four world-guardians then approached and took her to the lake Manasarovar. They bathed her, robed her in a dress, anointed her with perfumes and decked her with flowers in a manner fit to meet some divinity. Then a Bodhisatta, by name Sumedha, appeared before her saying, "I have decided to take my last and final birth on this earth, will you consent to be my mother?" She said, "Yes, with great pleasure." At this moment Mahamaya awoke" (p.3).

Very strangely, even Ambedkar's narration of Buddha's birth begins with Bodhisatta's entry into the womb of Mahamaya to take his "last and final birth on this earth!"

> "Next morning Mahamaya told her dream to Suddhodana. Not knowing how to interpret the dream, Suddhodana summoned eight Brahmins who were most famous in divination" (p. 3).

Here follows a long description of "a befitting reception" which Suddhodana gave to those eight Brahmins:

> "He caused the ground to be strewn with festive flowers and prepared high seats for them. He filled the bowls of the Brahmins with gold and silver and fed them on cooked ghee, honey, sugar and excellent rice and milk. He also gave them other gifts such as new clothes and tawny cows. When the Brahmins were propitiated, Suddhodana related to them the dream Mahamaya had, and said, "Tell me what it means. The Brahmins said: "Be not anxious. You will have a son, and if he leads a householder's life he will become a universal monarch, and if he leaves his home and goes forth into a homeless state and becomes a sanyasi, he will become a Buddha, a dispeller of illusions in the world" (p. 4).

The Brahmins did not say any thing definitely; they said 'either this will happen or that will happen'! What could those fellows, who ate so much and who grabbed so many presents say except prattling that some thing great would happen to the King's son?

The tales relating to Buddha may have been full of superstitious notions. But should Ambedkar accept all such crazy tales as they are? The person, who resolved to explain Buddhism as a solution to social problems,

is telling his readers thus, "Look, how miraculous the birth of Buddha is"! In fact, Ambedkar too believed that Buddha's birth was miraculous. That is why he narrated every thing as a great truth as if all incidents and miracles occurred exactly as depicted in the religious stories! It was Ambedkar's attempt to tell his readers that Bodhisatta was going to emerge as Buddha and raise the world to a greater height. If this were not his attempt, the narration would have been like this: A son was born to a king, and so on. But there is no difference whatsoever between a stupid religious text and Ambedkar's narration. Having carried the womb for ten months, Mahamaya started for her parental home. A golden palanquin, with its carriers and many servants, were ready to take her. They reached Lumbini Grove. The Grove looked beautiful with various kinds of trees with flowers and fruits. Mahamaya wanted to take a stroll in the Grove, got down from the palanquin, stood under a 'royal sal tree' and held its branch.

> "She rose on her toes and caught the bough. Immediately she was lifted up by its upward movement and being shaken, she felt the pangs of childbirth. While holding the branch of the sal tree she was delivered of a son in a standing position" (p. 5).

She delivered a child while holding the branch of a tree, says Ambedkar! Moreover, "being shaken, she felt the pangs of childbirth". Ambedkar tells it as logic! The real intention of this kind of narration is to say that ordinary human beings are born on the earth but very great persons are born in the sky without touching the earth. Ambedkar has not hesitated even a little to transfer the garbage from religious stories. The confidence of this devotee in the Buddha's birth is at such a level!

> "The child was born in the year 563 B.C. on the Vaishakha Paurnima day... At the moment when the child was born there dwelt on the Himalayas a great sage named Asita. Asita heard that the gods over the space of the sky were shouting the word 'Buddha' and making it resound... Surveying with his divine eyes the whole of the Jambudvipa, Asita saw that a boy was born in the house of Suddhodana shining with all brilliance" (p. 5).

(Ambedkar narrates this as if he was a witness to sage surveying with divine eyes like a pair of Binoculars). That sage at once started to the king along with his nephew. (This means Sages also roam here and there along with their nephews and nieces!) The sage blessed the king and made him happy saying, "Victory, Victory, O Raja, may you live long!" He also said, "A son is born to you, O Raja! Desiring to see him have I come".

Suddhodana said, "The boy is asleep, O sage!..."

"Not long, O king, do such great beings sleep. Such good beings are by nature wakeful", the sage said. (So, great beings are those who

are wakeful even when they are asleep! This is the definition of great beings!).

> "Then did the child out of compassion for Asita, the great sage, make a sign of awakening" (p. 6).

(It would have been better if sage Asita jumped into some pond and died. He himself was such a great sage that he could survey the whole of Jambudvipa with his divine eyes! But this kid is much greater than the sage! It is because he is the son of a king, you know!)

The sage rose up with joy and held the boy who woke up. (Sages and their ilk should not hold infant babies. They grow very long beards. In fact none of those who have beards and moustaches should hold children. That is why, children are born to women and brought up by women!)

As soon as he saw the boy, the sage realized that this boy was a great man. The sage has the knowledge of 'science of marks on the body'. He realized that the boy's body has all the features of a great man.

> "Asita observing the child, beheld that it was endowed with the thirty-two marks of a great man and adorned with the eighty minor marks, his body surpassing that of Sakra, Brahma, and his aura surpassing them a hundred thousand-fold, breathed forth this solemn utterance, "Marvellous, verily, is this person that has appeared in the world" (p.6).

Of the 32 marks on the body of the child, we will see some details concerning only 2 marks. Nowhere do we find details concerning the remaining 30 major features or the 80 minor marks.

Sage Asita knows that a person with all those marks on the body will become either a 'universal monarch' or a 'fully enlightened Buddha', that is, either of these two. To become great men, one should either be an autocrat who keeps the entire world under his foot or a person who possesses great knowledge possessed by no one else. Such great men should not be equal with other human beings. Except these two kinds of great men, who are above all persons, the remaining human beings are useless fellows! Of all the millions of human beings living on the earth, a great emperor and a great sage—these two persons alone are great human beings! Ambedkar has no contempt for such wicked notions which are useless from the view point of either logic or the principle of equality. Moreover, he agrees with such kinds of hegemony!

Sage Asita understood that the boy would become a Buddha. He said:

> "this boy will without doubt become a Buddha and attain supreme and complete enlightenment and having done so, will turn the supreme wheel

> of the Doctrine that has not been turned before him by any other being in the world; for the weal and happiness of the world will he teach his Doctrine" (p. 7).

The fact that sage Asita said—that the child would teach a particular doctrine—means that the sage himself knew the doctrine, didn't he? Then what is the point in saying that no other being knew it before him?

Sage Asita praised the child, made the king happy, ate well, collected gifts and departed happily with his nephew. The sage was really wise, wasn't he?

Ambedkar narrates such stories as these to show that very great sages had said that the boy was to become a very great man. He may believe in such crazy stories. But, even if believes, he should not bring in such stories into a discussion of 'social problems', should he? But 95% of what Ambedkar wrote concerning Buddha's life represents the same trend. It is so because this trend shows the path of emancipation for human beings! We are obliged to understand Buddhism out of such stories. So we must examine them.

Even in the Biographies on Ambedkar, we find accounts suggesting that he too was born due to a mantra of a sanyasi. If very great men are born due to Bodhisattas, asetics, and sages, ordinary people are born foolishly due to their parents! This is the difference!

Well, coming back to our child, he was given the name Siddharth. The surname was 'Gautama' (hereafter Siddharth Gautama, Siddharth or Gautama). When the boy was 7 days old, his mother died due to some ailment. Gautama's maternal aunt had a son named Nanda. Ananda was Gautama's paternal uncle's son and Devadatta was Gautama's paternal aunt's son.

"At the age of eight Siddharth started his education". Ambedkar describes Siddharth's teachers as "of distinguished descent and of high lineage". It did not occur to Ambedkar that he should reject such terms as 'high lineage'.

Siddharth mastered Vedas, Vedangas and Upanishads. Became an expert in all the philosophic systems. He also learnt the science of concentration and meditation.

> "While everything for the cultivation of the mind was provided his education in the military science befitting a Kshatriya was not neglected" (p. 10).

Siddharth was a kind hearted person. He did not like hunting. His maternal aunt used to argue with him saying:

"You have forgotten that you are a Kshatriya and fighting is your duty. The art of fighting can be learned only through hunting for only by hunting can you learn how to aim accurately. Hunting is a training ground for the warrior class" (p. 11).

Siddharth would ask her: "Why should a Kshatriya fight? How can it be the duty of man to kill man?"

She would say, "Kshatriyas must fight. If they don't, who will protect the kingdom?"

Gautama would respond: "If all Kshatriyas loved one another, would they not be able to protect their kingdom without resort to killing?"

Once when Siddharth was on his father's farm, a bird shot by an arrow fell at his feet. He saved the bird by removing the arrow, dressing its wound and giving it water to drink. Devadatta, who had shot the bird with his arrow, came to Siddharth and demanded that he give the bird to him. Siddharth refused.

"The matter was referred to arbitration. The arbitrator upheld the point of view of Siddharth Gautama" (p. 13).

There is a strange incident which tells that Siddharth used to oppose *exploitation.*

"Siddharth was of kindly disposition. He did not like exploitation of man by man. Once he went to his father's farm with some of his friends and saw the labourers ploughing the land, raising bunds, cutting trees, etc., dressed in scanty clothes under a hot burning sun. He was greatly moved by the sight. He said to his friends, can it be right that man should exploit another? How can it be right that the labourer should toil and the master should live on the fruits of his labour? His friends did not know what to say. For they believed in the old philosophy of life that the worker was born to serve and that in serving his master he was only fulfilling his destiny" (p. 10).

Is it not strange to note Siddharth speaking of exploitation. Though Ambedkar did not give details of the book in which he found this incident, he must have had some basis, surely? Are all these words found exactly in this form in that original source? Are these expressions, namely, 'exploitation of one man by another' and 'master living on the fruits of the toil of the labourers', found in the original? Or did Ambedkar give them his own interpretation of the incident as he did in many contexts? We may find the details if we refer 'Nikayas' or some such source. If we don't find any textual sources for the expressions 'labourers', 'toil', 'exploitation', 'fruits of labour', it amounts to Ambedkar's own

interpretation. It implies that Ambedkar created this incident in order to claim, 'Look, how Siddharth was moved by exploitation of man by man as early as two thousand years ago'. Hence it is important for us to ask, 'what is the basis for this incident?'

If the belief that 'the worker was born to serve his master' was the old philosophy, what was the new philosophy of Sidddharth? A person who thinks that it is not right if the master employs the fruit of the labour of labourers would also know the 'right' thing to do. Did Siddharth say, then, that it would be right if masters lived on their own labour instead of living on the fruits of the labour of labourers?

We will see later what Siddharth said about the same thing which he considered unjust in his boyhood. Siddharth married Yashodhara after he completed the sixteenth year. They had a son. His name was Rahula.

The prophecy of the sage Asita that Siddharth would become sanyasi, however, continued to haunt his father. In order to get his son engrossed in the 'pleasures and carnal joys', he provided a harem with 'very beautiful inmates'. But Siddharth refused to even glance at the other women.

The prime minister persuaded Siddharth and preached him in many ways that even very great sages enjoyed the company of women other than their wives, that it was the duty of the prince to enjoy such pleasures and so on.

Siddharth rejected all that the Prime Minister said and replied: these are transitory and my mind cannot find pleasure in such worldly pleasures. We should not follow those great men who became victims to desire. They not only enjoyed those pleasures but also were destroyed by them. One should not touch women without real love. A man and woman who deceive one another are unfit even to look at each other.

Siddharth completed 20 years of age. At this age, every Sakya youth was expected to become a member of Sakya Sangh. The main duty of a member is to safeguard the interests of the Sakyas. For eight years, Siddharth was a 'very devoted and steadfast member'. Then an event occurred. Bordering on the state of the Sakyas was the state of the Koliyas. The two kingdoms were divided by the river Rohini. There used to be disputes and quarrels between those kingdoms for the sake of the river waters. One such clash now occurred afresh. The Sakya Sangh discussed whether they need to wage a war on Koliyas.

Siddharth opposed the war. He said: War is not a solution to any problem. One war will lead to another. The killer gets a killer in his turn. We must solve the problem through negotiation.

But most members of the Sangh opposed Siddharth. They resolved to wage war. Siddharth refused to participate in the war. He opposed the majority decision. Now this was a major offence according to the rules of Sakya Sangh. The Sangh could impose three kinds of punishment for this offence: death sentence, exile, or confiscation of property. It required permission of the king of Kosala to impose either of the first two punishments. The Sakya Sangh could impose the third punishment on its own. The Senapati (main official) of the Sangh said to Siddharth:

> "Remember the Sangh has other ways of punishing you. The Sangh can declare a social boycott against your family and the Sangh can confiscate your family lands. For this the Sangh does not have to obtain the permission of the king of the Kosalas" (p. 27).
>
> "Siddharth realized the consequences that would follow if he continued his opposition to the Sangh in its plan of war against the Koliyas".

The last of the consequences is 'confiscation of property' of his family. Siddharth said:

> "Please do not punish my family... Do not make them destitute by confiscating their land which is their only means of livelihood... I am the guilty person... Sentence me to death or exile, whichever you like" (p. 28).

Sentencing Siddharth to exile is confirmed. But the Sakya kingdom was a subsidiary of the Kosala kingdom. The Sakya Sangh was afraid that the king of Kosala might come to know about the sentence imposed on the Sakya prince.

Then the head of Sakya Sangh said to Siddharth:

> "the matter is sure to become known to the king of the Kosalas and he is sure to conclude that it is the Sangh which has inflicted this punishment and take action against the Sangh."
>
> "If this is the difficulty I can easily suggest a way out," said Siddharth Gautama. "I can become a Parivrajaka and leave this country. It is a kind of an exile" (p. 28).

He also said, "I promise I shall not appeal to the king of the Kosalas" (p. 28). This means, Siddharth said that he would not tell in public that the Sangh had imposed the sentence of exile but would tell the public that he had voluntarily left the country. The Sangh agreed to this. Siddharth Gautama chose to become a Parivrajaka.

All that is shown here as a reason for Siddharth's conversion into Sanyasa is Ambedkar's modification of the original narrative. This is how Ambedkar has explained his modification in his 'Introduction':

"Why did the Buddha take Parivraja? The traditional answer is that he took Parivraja because he saw a dead person, a sick person and an old person. This answer is absurd on the face of it. The Buddha took Parivraja at the age of 29. If he took Parivraja as a result of these three sights, how is it he did not see these three sights earlier? These are common events occurring by hundreds and the Buddha could not have failed to come across them earlier. It is impossible to accept the traditional explanation that this was the first time he saw them. The explanation is not plausible and does not appeal to reason. But if this is not the answer to the question, what is the real answer?"

Questioning thus, he stopped that discussion at this point. This means, Ambedkar himself changed the old reason since it did not appear logical! He changed it in such a way that Siddharth Gautama opposed war, that he was punished for it and that he became sanyasi in order to keep the sentence secret.

Well, is this new reason logical if the old reason was not?

If Siddharth believes that his decision not to wage war was correct, he should face any kind of punishment. Just as he was ready for other punishments, he should also be ready for the punishment of confiscation of property. What should he tell the Sangh? He should have said, 'I believe my decision to be right. If you think it is wrong, you may pass any sentence against me. That is up to you. I am prepared to face any punishment'. But Siddharth did not say so. What did he say? He requested them not to impose the sentence of confiscating the property of his family. If the Sangh had the right to impose such a punishment, he should not ask for exemption. But Siddharth begged the Sangh not to confiscate the property of his family. He further said, 'I will tell the people that I have myself become a Parivrajaka and am leaving the country. I will not tell people that the Sangh passed the sentence of exile against me'. This means he was prepared to tell a lie. Does this behaviour fit to the character of Siddharth? A person who stood for an ideal, instead of facing any sentence, begged the Sangh not to pass a particular punishment. This is the first blunder! Promising to tell lies to people that he would become Parivrajaka and then leave the country voluntarily is the second blunder.

Siddharth Gautama had been a person of good character since boyhood. Speaking lies is not in tune with his character. Moreover why should a person leave the country when he became a Sanyasi? Why can he not stay in his own country? Ambedkar did not advise Siddharth as to what answer he should give if some one asked him thus, 'Fine, you have become a sanyasi. But why must you leave the country?'

Even more important than this point is the question whether, before

this, Siddharth ever saw a corpse, a sick person or an old man until then? This question is not something that has no answer. Why does a prince have to see 'dead bodies'? Siddharth was originally a tender hearted person. Perhaps his family might have kept him away from such scenes! Concerning aged people, though he might have seen some old people he might not have seen hundred year old people! Similarly he might not have seen a person suffering with serious illness. Therefore, there is nothing odd in the traditional interpretation. In fact, there is a positive feature in it. To say that Siddharth witnessed some tragic scenes, was moved deeply and therefore became sanyasi in order to discover the path of emancipation would mean that he became a sanyasi in order to do some good to the world.

But according to the new reason, we get an impression that Siddharth left his family under the pretext of renunciation in order to avoid confiscation of the properties of his family by Sakya Sangh. Which reason is appropriate to the character of Siddharth? The second reason makes Siddharth a lier and some one who is very anxious to protect his property. The first reason presents Siddharth as someone who became a sanyasi for the welfare of the world. Hence the old reason alone is logical. The new reason which Ambedkar discovered is not useful for anything except to defame Siddharth.

Ambedkar at every point faces this kind of problem because of his over-anxiety to discover a 'new reason'! He does not check whether his new reason is correct or not! He simply 'discovers' something or the other!

It is strange to note his desire to propose a new theory even without considering the simple question and obvious question, why should a person, who became sanyasi, leave his country?

After interpreting that Siddharth became sanyasi in order to avoid confiscation of his family property by Sakya Sangh, will it possible for anybody to protect Siddharth's reputation? Will it be possible even for Ambedkar? This means, Ambedkar thought very logically and discovered a means of defaming Siddharth!

2) Stories that 'defame' Buddha!

Siddharth Gautama, in order to take Parivraja (renunciation), started for the Ashram of Bharadwaja on a horse accompanied by his servant Channa. His parents and citizens too reached the Ashram and were filled with grief.

Siddharth removed his dress, ornaments and garments, gave them to Channa to take back home.

"Then he had his head shaved as was required for a Parivrajaka. His cousin Mahanama had brought the clothes appropriate for a Parivrajaka and a begging bowl. Siddharth wore them" (p. 34).

Looking at the crowd that followed him he said,

"I have failed to settle the dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas. But if you create public opinion in favour of settlement you might succeed" (p. 34).

(He had promised the Sangh that he would not reveal the actual reason, hadn't he? Why is he revealing it here Mr. Ambedkar? This is another blunder. It seems he has not understood the reason that you said for becoming a Sanyasi!)

Siddharth Gautama was 29 when he became sanyasi.

All the people admired him saying that he was doing a "supreme sacrifice" for the sake of maintaining "peace" (p. 35)!.

Siddharth reached the banks of the river Anoma on a horse, along with Channa. While Channa was overcome with sorrow, Siddharth consoled him:

"Abandon this distress Channa... change is inevitable in corporal beings who are subject to different births" (p. 37).

After consoling Channa, Gautama went on his way toward the forest.

"Leaving Kapilavastu, Siddharth Gautama thought of going to Rajagraha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha". Halting at Ashrams of Brahmin men and women, he travelled for 400 miles by foot. People who saw him on his way were astonished at his 'personality', 'dignity' and 'splendid beauty'.

"Gautama reached Rajagraha surrounded by five hills, well guarded and adorned with mountains, and supported and hallowed by auspicious and sacred places" (p. 45).

(It is an 'auspicious and sacred' place, apparently, only if mountains and temples surround it! Even the earth has the quality of being an 'auspicious' and 'sacred' place. Ambedkar too is respecting such descriptions and reproducing them in his book!)

On reaching Rajagraha Gautama put up a small hut made of leaves at the foot of the Pandava hill.

Bimbisara, the King of Magadha came to see Gautama and began to praise him: your race began with the sun; your hand is fit to rule the

kingdom and not to hold a begging bowl; If you don't like taking your father's kingdom, I will give you half of my kingdom; I will give you my army. Conquer your enemies! Or, if religion is your aim, then offer sacrifices! Climb up to heaven! (pp: 46-9).

In response to Bimbisara's advice, Gautama gave a very long answer with modesty.

O King! You have said all this with affection for me. "Those men who act unchangingly towards their friends in reverses of fortune are true friends. (Is Gautama thinking that there is a reverse of his fortune?) I am not so afraid even of serpents nor of thunderbolts falling from heaven, nor of flames blown together by the wind, as I am afraid of the worldly objects...when they have obtained all the earth girdled by the sea kings wish to conquer the other side of the great ocean... Pleasures, which are like an angry, cruel serpent bite even men of self-control...Water is desired for allaying thirst; food in the same way for removing hunger: a house for keeping off the wind, the heat of the sun, and the rain; and dress for keeping off the cold and to cover one's nakedness. So too a bed is for removing drowsiness; a carriage for remedying the fatigue of a journey; a seat for alleviating the pain of standing; so bathing as a means for washing, health, and strength. External objects therefore are to human beings means for remedying pain— not in themselves sources of enjoyment;...Since the well-known opposite pairs, such as gain and loss and the rest, are inseparably connected with everything in the world,—therefore, no man is invariably happy on the earth nor invariably wretched. When I see how the nature of pleasure and pain are mixed, I consider royalty and slavery as the same; a king does not always smile, nor is a slave always in pain" (pp: 49-53).

Thus, Gautama said many more things. (All these words are briefly given here. There is much more preaching in Ambedkar's report).

If we examine Gautama's words so far, both master and slave are alike in the view of Gautama. Both will have pleasure as well as pain!

But what is the truth? While the master gets pleasure by means of his slaves, the slaves will get pain from their masters. This is their relationship. But according to Gautama, both are same: the one who serves and the one who receives service. As the slave does not always cry but also laughs once in a while, it amounts to the fact that slave too has pleasures. Similarly a master will have not only pleasures but also some pain, he too will face hardships. In this manner, both the master and his slave have pain and pleasures equally. This is the understanding of Gautama regarding master and slave.

Let there be any number of blunders in this story that goes back 2,500 years. We have to leave it like that thinking that such was the conception of that period. But we can not criticise Gautama as we might criticise a contemporary person. If we have any criticism, it is not against Gautama but against Ambedkar since he tells us, "look, how great is Gautama's theory. If we raise questions Gautama's words in this story, it does not mean that we are raising them against Gautama but really against Ambedkar.

Ambedkar did not make any criticism of Gautama's words, namely, 'no man is invariably happy on the earth nor invariably wretched', and 'I consider royalty and slavery the same'. Ambedkar agreed totally with these words as if they contained great truth. Well, will Ambedkar apply this principle to Hindus and untouchables? Will either Ambedkar or the untouchables agree if someone says, all will have pain and pleasures. The pain of untouchables and the pain of Hindus are the same. Or that the pleasures of untouchables and the pleasures of Hindus too are the same! If they agree, why would they make those special demands and special arrangements for untouchables? From Gautama, they ought to learn the principle that all are the same, ought they not? Why didn't they learn this lesson, then?

When he was young, what did Gautama say concerning the labourers working on his father's farm? Is it right if the master enjoys the fruit of the labour of labourers? he had asked. It was in the sense that some injustice being done to the labourers. But the same Gautama is now, at the age of 29, saying that Masters and labourers are the same! Ambedkar has neither criticism nor he is surprised.

Gautama was not satisfied with simply saying that 'royalty and slavery are same'. He also said that the sorrows of King were great. Concerning the sorrows of kings, he said:

> "Since to be a king involves a wider range of responsibility, therefore, the sorrows of a king are great; for a king is like a peg,—he endures trouble for the sake of the world" (p. 53).

This is also what all people think about kings: that the king shoulders the responsibility of protecting the entire country and he works very *hard* for this!

But in reality, the king is the principal representative of the propertied class. He too possesses vast lands, mansions, heaps of money, ornaments and many kinds of other properties. 'Administration' is merely a programme that oppresses the class that performs labour.

Many hundreds and thousands of labourers do service for the king inside and outside the house. He does not have any work to do. He does nothing, nor even the slightest job. He does not even put on his own shirt. Servants do it for him. What the king always does is to wallow here and there—on the throne for a while, conspiring for a while as to how to occupy the neighboring kingdom, in the flower gardens for a while, in his harem for a while—excepting these activities, he does not do anything. It is the servants who undergo the entire drudgery, other higher-grade employees manage administrative matters and soldiers take care of the defence. There is nothing which the king has to do except wallow in comfort.

Goutama knew all these facts. He had observed kings closely. Yet he says that 'kings endure trouble for the sake of the world'. He further says that what happiness does a king have by being a king; he has all sorrows and troubles. His sympathy for the kings reveals itself like this:

> "And since after even conquering the whole earth, one city only can serve as a dwelling place and even there only one house can be inhabited, is not royalty mere labour for others? And even in royalty nothing more than one pair of garments is all he needs, and just enough food to keep off hunger; so only one bed, and only one seat is all that a king needs; other distinctions are only for pride" (p. 53).

He is treating the throne as a 'need'. Only one pair of garments! Only one bed! Only one palace ('house'). He needs only one of every thing. These are the needs of the king according to Gautama. Then why should he conquer the world? For the sake of the world? Will the world ask him to conquer itself?

Gautama perhaps says, "Even if the king conquers the whole world, it is still only a single world. It is a pity that he won't have two worlds to conquer!"

All the royal luxuries are meant for exhibiting royalty; says Gautama! That is not for the king! Whose need is exhibiting royalty? Is it of the king or of the people? Every thing that a king does is labour for others! Which means, the king always endures troubles for the sake of people—this is what Gautama believes.

While Gautama speaks like a faithful advocate of kings, Ambedkar presents Gautama's words with reverence as if they contain great morals!

Finally, Gautama told Bimbisara:

You advise me to enjoy pleasures, by ruling the kingdom? But I can live with satisfaction even in the absence of a kingdom. I don't want to be diligent in sacrifices and seek a glorious fruit by causing pain to other living beings.

Bimbisara saluted Gautama and returned to his palace.

Subsequently, Gautama came to know through some Parivrajakas (sanyasis) that attempts to wage the war were stopped due to the agitation of people and the Koliyas and Sakyas had made peace. This news made Gautama very uneasy. "There is now no need for you to continue to be a Parivrajaka. Why don't you go home and join your family?" said those Sanyasis.

> "Left alone, he bagan to reflect on his own position and to make sure if any reason was left for him to continue his Parivraja" (p. 57).

This is a continuation of the change that Ambedkar made. The question whether to abandon Parivraja in the middle or to continue would not have arisen if Gautama had become a Parivrajaka due to the old reason—that he was moved by the sight of a very old person, a sick person and a corpse and became a sanyasi with a view to discover a path to emancipation. Now Gautama is in big trouble because the story runs according to Ambedkar's modification that he had become a sanyasi on account of the question of war.

Since Sakya Sangh itself withdrew its attempts to start a war, the sentence passed against Gautama too could be withdrawn. The Sangh could ask him to come back. Hence, Gautama is placed in a situation in which he ought to think whether he has to return home or continue as a sanyasi.

Gautama not have any specific objective as to what to do by continuing as a sanyasi. He left his country in the attire of a sanyasi in order to protect his family's property and not out of a desire for renunciation. Now Ambedkar pushed the story as if Gautama thought of the 'welfare of the world' and decided to continue Parivraja (renunciation). But how big an injustice it is to the character of Gautama if he debated even for a while whether to continue Parivraja or not! This problem would not have arisen if the story had proceeded in such a way that Gautama was seen to become a sanyasi originally for the welfare of the world. But the second mistake of Ambedkar became inevitable as a continuation of his first mistake.

Gautama's thoughts proceeded as follows after he came to know about the peace:

> "He had left his people for what?, he asked himself. He had left his home because he was opposed to war. "Now that the war is over is there any problem left to me? Does my problem end because war has ended?" On a deep reflection he thought not. "The problem of war is essentially a problem of conflict. It is only a part of a larger problem.

> This conflict is going on not only between kings and nations but between nobles and Brahmins, between householders, between mother and son, between son and mother, between father and son, between sister and mother, between companion and companion. The conflict between nations is occasional. But the conflict between classes is constant and perpetual. It is this which is the root of all sorrow and suffering in the world. True, I left home on account of war. But I cannot go back home although the war between the Sakyas and Koliyas has ended. I see now that my problem has become wider. I have to find a solution for this problem of social conflict. How far do the old-established philosophies offer a solution of this problem? Can he accept any one of the social philosophies? He was determined to examine everything for himself' (pp:57-8).

In this manner, Gautama determined to discover something for the welfare of the world and left Rajagraha. On his way, he stayed in the hermitage of sage Brighu for some time and observed various kinds of penances. The food that the saints ate included: things growing out of water (Does it mean fish?), uncooked food (They do not have wives, you see?. Who will cook for them round cakes made of black gram and fried in oil and who will cook sweet cakes made of various grams and fried in oil?) and bulbous roots. This is why, ascetics *invade* the houses of people with families and relish the feasts offered. How long would they chew roots and eat seeds? We find evidence to this in this volume (No. 11):

> "A Brahmin by name Amagandha was an ascetic who lived in the region of Himalayas with his pupils... Every year they came down from their hermitage in search of salt and acids. The inhabitants of the village received them with honour and gave them hospitality for four months" (p. 401).

This means they were vexed eating grass and the like all the time.

In Brighu's Ashram (p. 61), "Some live like the birds on gleaned corn, others graze on grass like the deer, others live on air like the snakes [Do snakes live on air? All these are lies! They catch frogs, don't they?], as if turned into ant-hills" (If the backs and beards of sages are places to play, there would be lot of fun for ants!).

A sanyasi tells Gautama that sanyasis eat cowdung and sleep on a bed-of-thorns (This is in another context: p. 429).

Human beings who roam in the forests without doing any labour have to live like animals eating whatever they find in nature. That is why, these sages who do not perform any labour, live on leaves, seeds, grass and the like.

"Others, with their tufts of matted hair continually wet with water, twice offer oblations. [perhaps cowdung or grass which they eat] to Agni with hymns; others, plunging like fish into the water, dwell there with their bodies scratched by tortoises."

Which means, they have so much dirt and itching that they cannot get rid of that muck unless tortoises scratch them! So on the whole, Brighu's Ashram is like a mental asylum!

All these troubles are for the sake of 'heaven' only! This is what sages themselves told Gautama. They also said that pain is the root of happiness. But this did not impress Gautama: You are doing all this for the sake of heaven. What I want is not heaven. My desire is that the ills of life on earth be probed and a solution found. Hence now I leave this place. You have been so affectionate to me. It is painful to me to leave you. But I am obliged to leave. Allow me to take your leave, he said and proceeded toward Vindhyas.

He reached the Ashram of Muni Arada in the city of Vaishali. Saluting the Muni, Gautama said, "I wish to be initiated into your doctrine and discipline" (p. 63). Impressed by the obedience of Gautama, the Muni "expounded to Gautama the tenets of what was known as the Sankhya philosophy" (p. 63).

Control of breathing is the means of achieving Dhyana (concentration of mind). Anapanasati and Pranayama are the ways by which Dhyana is achieved. Breathing in is called 'Puraka', holding the breath is 'Kumbhaka' and breathing out is 'Rechak'. Thus the Muni explained that the breathing process consists of three parts.

This sage is an expert in the control of breathing. (This means barring this expert, other human beings do not know how to breathe in and breathe out!)

Gautama felt that it would be very useful for him if he could get some training under the sage Arada. (Did Gautama think 'to emancipate the world from sorrow by learning the technique of breathing in? He thought of a very easy way, indeed!)

Gautama learnt well the technique of breathing, became an equal to his teacher and asked him if there was anything more to learn. 'No friend, this is all that I can teach', replied Arada. (This sage is a very good fellow, isn't he? He spoke the truth that he does not know anything except breathing).

Then Gautama went to another yogi by name Uddaka Ramaputta and learnt a technique that enables him 'to go one stage higher than that devised

by Arada'. (Does 'renunciation' involve only the nose? Why are they troubling the nose so much!)

Gautama then went to Magadha. (Sir, Gautama had already gone to Magadha, hadn't he? He had also talked to Bimbisara there, hadn't he? Now again to Magadha? Has he lost his way? It seems Gautama has really lost his way under the direction of Ambedkar!)

Gautama realized that the technique of controlling breathing in Magadha was different from that of Kosala. (What! Is breathing through nose in one way at Kosala and in another way at Magadha? Oh, all these sages have decided to see the end of the *nose*! They don't touch *ears*, do they? Then, why are they running after the nose?)

The technique in Magadha was not to breathe but to reach concentration by stopping breathing! (Good! Stopping breathing and going straight to heaven! This is what is needed, isn't it?)

> "Gautama learned this technique. When he tried concentration by stopping breathing he found that piercing sounds used to come out of his ears, and his head appeared to him to be pierced as though by a sharp pointed knife. It was a painful process. But Gautama did not fail to master it. Such was his training in the Samadhi Marga" (p. 654).

(On the whole it is ear-aches and head-aches that Gautama achieved!).

Later Gautama wanted to learn 'asceticism'. He went to the hermitage of Negari situated on the banks of the river Nairanjana in Gaya.

The path of asceticism is much more 'severe'. (Alas! What kind of thing it would be!) Gautama practised this path with severe 'austerities and self-mortification'.

According to the restrictions, he should not accept food from not more than 7 houses. He should not accept more than 7 morsels of food from one house.

> "He lived on a single saucer of food a day, but not more than seven saucers" (p. 66).

Shall we count how many morsels of food there would be if collected from 7 houses in a day? People in a house give 7 morsels of food. The number of morsels in 7 saucers is $7 \times 7 = 49$. This is the amount of food consumed per day during the period of asceticism! What would be the amount of food if it were during the normal period of time?

After practising 49 morsels per day, later he will have food only once in two days! Thereafter only once in a week! Still thereafter only once in a month!

"As he advanced in the practice of asceticism his sole diet was herbs gathered green, or the grain or wild millets and paddy, or snippets hide, or water plants, or the red powder round rice-grains within the husk or the discarded scum of rice on the boil, or the flour of oilseeds" (p. 66).

"Thereafter Gautama lived on a single bean a day—or a single grain of rice a day" (p. 67).

(The beans, sesamum seeds and grains of rice of that time were perhaps of the size of present day palm fruits! This must have been the case).

His attire during the period of asceticism:

"His raiment was of hemp or hempen mixture of cerements of rags from the dust-heap, of bar, of the black antelope's pelt either whole or split down the middle, of grass, of strips of bark or wood, hair of men or animals woven into a blanket, or of owl's wings" (p. 66).

Asceticism means torturing one's own body. One should not stand up; should not walk. One has to move only in the squatting position! The more you move squatting the greater your asceticism! You have to pluck out the hair of head and beard! The more you pluck the more you become an ascetic!

"He plucked out the hair of his head and the hair of his beard, never quitted the upright for the sitting posture, squatted and never rose up, moving only squatting" (p. 66). [Let him pluck his own hair. We should thank him for not pouncing on others and pluck their hair]. "He took up his abode in the awesome depths of the forest, depths so awesome that it was reputed that none but the senseless could venture without his hair standing on end. When the cold season brought chill wintry nights, then it was that in the dark half of the months he dwelt by night in the open air and in the dark thicket by day. But when there came the last broiling month of summer before the rains, he made his dwellings under the baking sun by day and in the stifling thicket by night. In a charnel ground did he lay down with charred bones for pillow" (p. 67). [So he is permitted to sleep? That too, with a pillow under his head!]

The dirt and filth accumulated on his body for years and it dropped off by itself.

What is Ambedkar's intention in narrating such crazy stories about Gautama? It is to say, "Look how severely Gautama practised asceticism in search of truth!" But need he tell us such incidents for that purpose? It did not occur to Ambedkar that these stories—of moving only in the squatting position and plucking of his own hair—would lower the reputation of Gautama (not only of Gautama but also his own reputation). Do all

these weird actions make great ascetic practice? Are these actions consistent with those of a sane person? The character called Gautama has some 'logic' right from the childhood. Why these crazy actions in his behaviour? Moreover, Gautama opposed them himself when he observed sages who practised such things. How can such a person himself perform these insane actions? Thus this narration is not appropriate for this story of Gautama. But Ambedkar didn't consider this reasoning. He thought that all these crazy actions would bring Gautama lot of reputation.

Gautama, with these crazy acts, practised asceticism for a period of not one month or two months but for years! However much he did he couldn't find any 'new light' (except accumulation of dirt, filth and itching of the back!)

Finally, (after 6 years) He reflected to himself: 'This is not the way, even to passionlessness, nor to perfect knowledge, nor to liberation' (p.67).

'Can they call torturing ('mortification') of the body spirituality? Since mind regulates body, it is important to control thought. When the body is wearied with hunger, thirst and fatigue, the mind would no longer be under its own control. How can we reach the goal when the mind is not composed? We can attain mental peace and stability only when we satisfy the body's wants constantly—thinking thus and wearied with hunger, thirst and fatigue, Gautama sat under a Banyan tree.

There a woman named Sujatha came to worship the tree. She offered food to Gautama in a golden bowl.

Gautama took a bath in the river and ate the food. That night, when he slept Gautama had five dreams. (He must have slept the whole night happily. He might have even received five bowls of food in five dreams!) "When he awoke he interpreted his dreams to mean that he was sure to attain enlightenment. He had also tried to forecast his future. This he did by throwing the bowl of food into the river Nairanjana saying: "If I am to have enlightenment let the bowl ascend the stream; if not let it go down."

Look, it is pity that he threw away someone else's bowl! Moreover the crazy fellow is asking the bowl to forecast his future. The bowl should forecast whether this madness would diminish and humankind would find the path of emancipation! Aha! How miserable is the situation of *human kind*!

> "The vessel, indeed, began to float against the current and at last sank near the abode of Kala, a Naga king" [Did it sink? It shouldn't have sunk, should it!]

Aha! How wonderful is Ambedkar's courage! Will a thousand voices be enough to eulogize that courage?

"Fortified with hope and determination he ([Gautama] left Uruvela and towards evening went along the wide road to Gaya" (p. 73). [Sir, Gautama had already reached 'Gaya'! Now, he is *at* Gaya! Again to Gaya? Pity that he has no mental balance; he is wandering here and there!]

3) This is the 'Enlightenment' which Buddha obtained!

After the forecast of his future by vessel, Gautama left Uruvela and sat under a Banyan tree along the wide road to Gaya. Like all sages, he too sat down cross-legged facing the East.

> "Skin, sinew and bone may dry up as they will, my flesh and blood may dry in my body, but without attaining complete enlightenment I will not leave this seat" (p. 73).

What is this? He had already realized that one should not trouble the body, hasn't he? Then why is he doing it again? What fresh enlightenment does he get if he spoils thus the enlightenment which he had already obtained? How nicely he used to think when he was young! Why has he become so stupid after becoming a sanyasi?

Gautama, however, is not so stupid. Do you know what an intelligent thing he did before he sat under the tree to meditate?

> "To feed himself during the period of meditation Gautama had collected enough food to last him for forty days" (p. 74).

Food for forty days! How did he gather? If one goes for alms, people give alms enough only for one day. Whatever is collected in a day would suffice for that day only. How did he collect food for 40 days? Where did he store it? Why does he need more 'enlightenment' than this? What greater enlightenment would be there than the knowledge of collecting food in advance? Enlightenment has already dawned, hasn't it? What more should happen?

Mr. Ambedkar! Did you think you would protect Gautama's reputation by saying that he sat for meditation after collecting food for 40 days. Alas!

> "On the night of the last day of the fourth week light dawned upon him" (p. 75).

Oh, what a relief! Knowledge dawned? After four weeks? That is, after 28 days! Well, then, why does he need food for 40 days? Oh! Is

it because it is always better to store more than one needs? Well, then the real enlightenment had occurred a long time before he commenced his meditation. Ambedkar tells us:

> "He reached final enlightenment in four stages. In the first stage he called forth reason and investigation... In the second stage he added concentration. In the third stage he brought to his aid equanimity and mindfulness. In the fourth and final stage he added purity to equanimity and equanimity to mindfulness" (p. 75).

One stage of enlightenment per week! four stages of enlightenment in four weeks!

> "So in the end, after meditation for four weeks, darkness was dispelled, light arose, ignorance was dispelled and knowledge arose. He saw a new way" (p. 75).
>
> "He realized that there were two problems. The first problem was that there was suffering in the world and the second problem was how to remove this suffering and make mankind happy" (p. 75).
>
> "To both these questions he got a right answer which is called *'Samma Bodhi'* (Right Enlightenment)" (p. 76).

If we want to know what knowledge did Gautama obtain, it is not possible to know about it now itself, we must move further. Until then, a description of the lives of Bodhisatta and a discussion of Vedic philosophy will go on and on.

Gautama was merely a Bodhisatta before he attained enlightenment. He became 'Buddha' after enlightenment.

> "Who and what is a Bodhisatta? A Bodhisatta is a person who is seeking to be a Buddha" (p. 76).

How did Bodhisatta become Buddha? Bodhisatta acquires certain qualifications for ten lives and would finally become Buddha only in the tenth life. The following are the qualifications which a Bodhisatta acquires in each life (pp. 76-77):

- **In the first life:** He acquires Mudita (joy). He becomes sober like the moon freed from clouds. He is fervent in his desire to benefit all beings.
- **In the second life:** He acquires Vimala (purity). He now removes all thoughts of lust. He will be kind to all.
- **In the third life:** He acquires Prabhakari (Brightness). He will be ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of highest wisdom.

- **In the fourth life:** He acquires Arcishmati (Intelligence of Fire). He fixes his mind on the Eightfold path.
- **In the fifth life:** He acquires Sudurjaya (Difficult to conquer). He fully understands the connection of the relative and absolute.
- **In the sixth life:** He becomes Abhimukhi. He grasps the evolution of things, its cause, the Twelve Nidamas.
- **In the seventh life:** He becomes a Durangama (going far off). The lusts of the world (except lust for enlightenment!) no more cling to him than water to a lotus leaf. In this life he knows the Dhamma and presents it in ways understood by the people. (Alas, do we have to live seven lives in order to tell things intelligibly to all people!). He practices charity, patience, tactfulness, energy, calmness, intelligence and the highest wisdom.
- **In the eight life:** He becomes Achala (immovable). All strivings on the part of the Bodhisatta cease.
- **In the ninth life:** He becomes Sadhumati. This is the condition of one who has penetrated all Dhammas.
- **In the tenth life:** He becomes Dharmamegha. The Bodhisatta attains the infinite divine eye of a Buddha. Bodhisatta transforms into Buddha just as a hairy caterpillar evolves into a butterfly through some stages—all this narration is akin to exposition of scientific principles! Agreeing with the theory of lives in succession of Bodhisatta, Ambedkar is presenting this wealth of knowledge to people asking them, 'Learn this knowledge of lives in succession'. Thus Buddha emerged out of such great evolutionary process.

In order to know what new knowledge Buddha gained, we have to know first what the old knowledge already in currency was. Only then will we know whether Buddha's new knowledge is better than the old knowledge.

Most part of the old knowledge of that time relates to 'Vedas' only.

Vedas: "The Vedas are a collection of *Mantras,* i.e., hymns or chants. The reciters of these hymns are called Rishis. The Mantras are mere invocations to deities... The invocations are mere prayers for help against enemies, for gift of wealth, for accepting the offerings of food, flesh and wine from the devotee" (p. 81).

"The main problems of these Vedic philosophers were: How did the world originate? In what manner were individual things created? Why have they

their unity and existence? Who created, and who ordained? From what did the world spring up and to what again will it return?" (p. 81).

The answers to the questions are various: for example, Anila, Vedic philosopher, says that everything was created out of air (vayu). (Where did that air come from?). Dirghtamas argues that every thing comes from the sun. Narayana says that Purusha (God) is the first cause of the universe. It is from Purusha that the sun, the moon, the earth, water, fire, air, mid-air, the sky, the regions, the seasons, the creatures of the air, all animals, all classes of men, and all human institutions, had originated (p. 82).

"Among the ancient philosphers of India the most pre-eminent was Kapila." [The essence of his philosophy is that there is no truth without proof] "For purposes of proving the truth Kapila allowed only two means of proof—(1) perception and (2)inference. By perception is meant mental apprehension of a present object. Inference is threefold: (1) from cause to effect, as from the presence of clouds to rain; (2) from effect to cause, as from the swelling of the streams in the valleys to rain in the hills, and (3) by analogy, as when we infer from the fact that a man alters his place when he moves that the stars must also move, since they appear in different places" (p.84).

"Further, argued Kapila, an effect must differ from its cause, though it must consist of the cause. That being so, the universe cannot itself be the final cause. It must be the product of some ultimate cause" (p. 85).

(If the *universe* is the product of *some ultimate cause*, that some ultimate cause too is part of the universe. The universe plus some ultimate cause together constitute the *total universe*. The cause of that total universe lies in the universe itself. Universe itself is the cause for universe. It is its own cause. This appears to be a rational principle, doesn't it? Kapila, who thought about everything correctly, should have thought about the universe along these lines.)

Kapila's philosophical approach is as follows:

"The non-existent cannot be the subject of an activity: There is no new creation. The product is really nothing else than the material of which it is composed: the product exists before its coming into being in the shape of its material of which it is composed. Only a definite product can be produced from such material; and only a specific material can yield a specific result. What then is the source of the empirical universe? Kapila said the empirical universe consists of things evolved (Vyakta) and things that are not evolved (Avayakta)... When asked why the unevolved cannot be perceived, why does it not show movement which would make it perceivable, Kapila replied: "It may be due to various causes. It may be that its fine nature makes it imperceptible, just as other

things of whose existence there is no doubt, cannot be perceived; or because of their too great a distance or proximity; or through the intervention of a third object, or through admixture with similar matter; or through the presence of some more powerful sensation, or the blindness or other defect of the senses or the mind of the observer" (p. 85).

There is Dukha (suffering) in the world. This is, then, the essence of Kapila's philosophy.

Gautama did not like the philosophical approaches of Vedic Rishis. Kapila's philosophy greatly impressed him. Three aspects of Kapila's philosophy impressed him a lot. (1) To accept something as 'reality', it must rest on 'proof'; (2) There is no logical or factual basis for the presumption that God exists or that he created the universe; and (3) There is Dukha (suffering) in the world. These aspects made Buddha think. Based on these aspects, Buddha formed his views on Vedas and other texts.

In his view the Vedas were as worthless as a desert. He thought that there is nothing worth learning or borrowing from the Vedic Mantras. The philosophy of Vedic Rishis is useless because it does not teach any social values.

Brahmanas: These are part of the Vedas. Brahmanas and Vedas together are called by the common name 'Sruti'. According to the Brahmanas, Vedas are not only sacred but they are infallible and never to be questioned. The salvation of the soul—that is escape from transmigration—can be had only by the due performance of sacrifices and observance of religious rites and ceremonies and the offering of gifts to Brahmins. The system of ChaturVarna (four Varnas) is an ideal society. Shudras and women are unfit for education. Human life ought to go through the four stages: Brahmacharya, Grahastashrama, Vanaprasta and Sannyasa. Sannyasa is not open to the Shudras and women.

Buddha did not concur with any of these theses of the Brahmanas.

Upanishads: These are not part of the Vedas. "Some of them were ranged against the Vedic theologians, the Brahmin priests. All of them agreed in viewing Vedic study as a study of nescience or ignorance (avidya)" (p. 92).

They rejected sacrifices and funeral oblations. Their discussions centred round Brahman and Atman.

Of the theses of different schools of philosophy of his time, Buddha rejected some, accepted some and modified some in accordance with his own views.

He rejected the belief, for instance, that the Vedas are infallible and

they should not be questioned. He rejected the concepts of *creator* and *soul*. He opposed ritual sacrifices and the four Varna distinctions. And he accepted the logic of Kapila.

The philosophical notions and issues that Buddha modified are the following. He considered irrelevant such questions as: who is the creator of this universe? Does it have a beginning and an end? What will happen to human beings after death? For Buddha, these questions were in no way useful to human life. They teach people any Dhamma to be practised. It is useless to discuss things that have no connection with life. Buddha gave different interpretations of the concepts Karma, Rebirth and Salvation.

Karma: According to a conception prior to Buddha, Karma in the present life (birth) was the consequence of acts of a person in his past life or lives (birth). The past Karma of a person predetermines everything in his life. Buddha's meaning is different. He maintains that pain and pleasure in present life are due to environment.

Rebirth: Buddha too believed in *rebirth* but not in relation to the existence of the *soul*. When the human body dies, its elements join the mass of similar elements floating in space (Akash) and a new birth takes place. This is what the Buddha meant by rebirth.

> "It must be noted that the body dies. But the elements are ever living. This is the kind of rebirth in which the Buddha believed" (p. 330).

This is how Ambedkar interpreted Buddha.

Salvation: According to its conception prior to Buddha, salvation meant the saving of a soul from being sent to hell (p. 217). "With Buddha salvation means Nibbana and Nibbana means of control of passions" (p. 221). It is the duty of human beings to attain salvation.

In this manner, Buddha formed his own knowledge by accepting some of the old theories, rejecting some and modifying some.

What we have examined so far does not, of course, represent the entire theory of Buddha. A good deal more needs to be examined.

After having attained enlightenment, doubt arose in the mind of the Buddha that people, who held superstitious notions of soul and god, may not like his theory. Then a miracle occurred. Brahma Sahampati, knowing what was passing in the mind of the Buddha, left the Brahma world and appeared before the Buddha. And arranging his upper robe on one shoulder (Ambedkar refers to arranging of upper robe as though the actual incident had happened before his own eyes!), he bent down and said with clasped hands:

"Thou art Buddha. Thou art the Blessed one who is blessed with the fullest enlightenment... May the Lord in his compassion design to teach his gospel to men and to gods" (p. 112).

Further Brahma Sahampati kept on proclaiming to the world:

"Rejoice at the glad tidings. The Buddha, our Lord, has found the root of all evil and unhappiness in the world. He knows the way out" (p.113).

In this manner, he said many things and declared:

"His doctrine is the doctrine of righteousness and his aim is to establish the kingdom of righteousness on earth. His doctrine is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Blessed is the Buddha for his is the path of reason and his is the way of emancipation from superstition" (p. 114).

Coming down from the Brahma world and talking about *reason* and *emancipation* from *superstition*! Ambedkar is the witness to Brahma Sahampati's departure from the Brahma world and his appearance before Buddha!

What is this narration of stupid stories about Buddha who was a rationalist?

Didn't Ambedkar ignore the story that Buddha became a sanyasi after seeing a sick person, an aged person and a corpse on the ground that it seemed illogical? Similarly, he ought to have ignored other stories of the kind as well, oughtn't he? Are all such stories logical—for instance, that Bodhisatta took ten births and some guy came from the Brahma world and so on—? Can any disciple of Buddha, who was a rationalist, tolerate such stories which are irrational and superstitious?

But this is the trend that we find throughout Ambedkar's 600-page book on Buddha. All his personal interpretations of Ambedkar are meant only as defence of these false stories. What greater insult can a disciple inflict on his teacher who is a rationalist? It is simply a whimsicality of Ambedkar to put expressions like 'kingdom of righteousness' in the mouth of Brahma. It did not occur even a little to Ambedkar how crazy it would be to mention Brahma in Buddha's life. Such a crazy story appeared more logical to Ambedkar!

Initially, Buddha wanted to 'teach' his 'doctrine' to Alara Kalam. He came to know that Alara Kalam had died. Then he thought of preaching it to Uddaka Ramputta. But he too had passed away. Then he thought of the five sanyasis (Parivrajakas) whom he knew. Having learnt that they were in Sarnath, he went there and met them. They received him with great respect. Buddha told them that he found a new path. He said that

his Dhamma (religion) has nothing to do with god, soul, life after death, rituals and ceremonies.

He said that

> Men are living in sorrow, in misery and poverty. The world is full of suffering and that how to remove suffering...is the foundation and basis of Dhamma.... A religion which fails to recognize this is no religion at all (p. 121).

Buddha's words greatly impressed the sanyasis and they asked:

"Tell us how does your Dhamma remove suffering!" (p. 122).

Ah! At last we came to the real point! Those sanyasis have asked a good question. But, it would have been very nice if they had asked, You said that human beings are living in poverty and sorrow, didn't you? Why does suffering exist at all? Why do poverty and riches exist? But the sanyasis did not ask him this question.

They could have at least asked another commonsensical question: 'You said that human beings are living in poverty. Do all people live in poverty? Emperors, tributary kings, slave masters, merchants, moneylenders and such others are living in opulence. All are not living in poverty, are they? When you speak of human beings are you speaking of all or only some?'—This is what those sanyasis should have asked. But such a simple question did not occur to those sanyasis either. But let that pass. They did ask a very beautiful question, namely, 'How does your Dhamma remove suffering?' If there is a way of removing suffering , it would remove the suffering of the poor people as well, wouldn't it? That is, it would remove poverty. Hence, the question that they raised is enough!

Buddha did answer their question.

> "The Buddha then told them that according to his Dhamma if every person followed (1) the Path of Purity; (2) the Path of Righteousness; and (3) the Path of Virtue, it would bring about the end of all suffering" (p. 122).

This means, every person should be pure, righteous and virtuous. If all persons are good, none will suffer. This is the Dhamma that Buddha discovered. This is the enlightenment about which we eagerly awaited thus, 'what was the enlightenment of Buddha? What was it? What was it?'.

The sanyasis have again asked him,

"What does it mean by being pure, righteous and virtuous?"

Oh, these people are asking him so nicely, aren't they?

4) Purity, Righteousness and Virtue!

Terms like 'path of purity', 'path of righteousness' and 'path of virtue', clothed in archaic language sound orthodox, don't they? Not only here at this point, but also in subsequent pages of Ambedkar's book, we find such archaic language. But, the question is not whether the language is old or new. Even if the language is archaic and even if the path was proposed hundreds of years ago, we need not ignore it on the ground of language and time. We do need to consider whether the content of the doctrine is right or wrong and whether it solves the problem or not. This is the right attitude. Hence, let us not worry about usage!

We need to examine path of Buddha in a greater detail since Ambedkar is telling us that it is the only path of liberation of human kind. We ought to know the path of our emancipation.

Buddha has elaborated his path as follows.

Path of Purity means: 'Panchasheela' is another name of Buddha's path of purity. It has five principles: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not utter falsehood; (3) Do not steal; (4) Do not indulge in lust, and (5) do not take intoxicating drinks.

Path of righteousness means: Ashtanga Marga is another name of the path of righteousness. There are eight constituents of the Ashtanga Marga.

(1) **Samma Ditti** (Right views): One should not believe and practise rites, ceremonies, superstition and supernaturalism.

(2) **Samma Sankappo:** Aims, aspirations and ambitious of man should be noble and praiseworthy and not ignoble and unworthy.

(3) **Samma Vacca** (Right speech): One should always speak truth. Should not speak evil of others. Should not slender others. Should not use angry and abusive language towards any fellow man. Should speak kindly and courteously to all. One should not indulge in pointless, foolish talk but let his speech be sensible and to the purpose. The observance of right speech should not be the result of fear or favour.

(4) **Samma Kamanto:** One should practice right behaviour founded on respect for the feelings and rights of others.

(5) **Samma Ajivo:** Every individual has to earn his livelihood. But there are ways and ways of earning one's livelihood. Some are bad; some are good. Bad ways are those which cause injury or injustice to others. Good ways are those by which the individual earns his livelihood without causing injury or injustice to others. This is *Samma Ajivo.*

(6) **Samma Vyayamo** (Right endeavour): It removes Avijja. One has to prevent and suppress those states of mind that are in conflict with the Ashtanga Marga. It promotes the state of mind suitable for Ashtanga Marga. (This reminds us of physicians telling their sick persons: 'This medicine treats indigestion, this cures rheumatism, this absorbs the heat in the body', and so on. In the same manner, each of the constituents of Ashtanga Marga will treat the mind in one particular way!)

(7) **Samma Satti** calls for mindfulness and thoughtfulness. It means constant wakefulness of the mind. Watch and ward by the mind over the evil passions is another name for *Samma Satti.*

(8) **Samma Samadhi:** There is a risk of confronting the five hindrances which come in the way of the mind that tries to achieve the seven constituents of Ashtanga Marga mentioned above.

(5 hindrances for 7 constituents! For 1 hindrance,

$\frac{5}{7}$ = 0.7 hindrance! The 'sum' is somewhat difficult! Is it better to learn 'arithmetic' first?)

The five hindrances are: covetousness, ill will, sloth and torpor, doubt, and indecision. It is necessary to overcome these five fetters.

It is possible to overcome these fetters only through 'Samadhi'.

> "Samadhi is mere concentration. No doubt it leads to Dhyanic states which are self-induced, holding the five hindrances in suspense" (p.126).

This means, it *is* doubtful. If the mind tends to jump towards covetousness and doubt, Samadhi will do the job of pulling it from jumping thither! But it is said that the effect of Samadhi is only temporary. Then what is the way out? There is one called 'Samma Samadhi'. We have to get hold of it. This is eighth constituent of the Ashtanga Marga. We should not consider Samadhi and Samma Samadhi the same. They are different. This Samma Samadhi controls the mind itelf. The mind can't fool around with Samma Samadhi! The Samma Samadhi is so effective that

> "these Dhyana states (of Samadhi) are temporary. Consequently the suspension of the hindrances is also temporary. What is necessary is a permanent turn to the mind. Such a permanent turn can be achieved only by *Samma Samadhi.* Mere *Samadhi* is negative inasmuch as it leads to temporary suspension of the hindrances. In it there is no training to the mind. *Samma Samadhi* is positive. It trains the mind to concentrate..." (pp. 126-7).

That's it! Is it clear now what *Samma Samadhi* does? This is the eighth constituent. So far we have seen 'Ashtanga Marga'; that is 'path of righteousness'. Now let us look at the path of virtue also.

The path of virtue: It is also called theory of 'Paramitas' (States of Perfection). The path of virtue or Paramitas meant the observance of the 10 virtues: Sila, Dana, Uppekha, Nekkhama, Virya, Khanti, Succa, Adhithana, Karuna and Maithri.

> "These virtues one must practice to his utmost capacity. That is why they are called Paramitas (St. .es of Perfection)" (p. 128).

This is the path of virtue.

The details of these 10 virtues are (pp: 127-8):

(1) **"Sila** is moral temperament, the disposition not to do evil and the disposition to do good; to be ashamed of doing wrong. To avoid to do evil for fear of punishment is *Sila"*. (Should people avoid doing evil merely for fear of punishment? Is that virtue? Is it not an 'evil' to say so?)

(2) **"Dana** means the giving of one's possessions, blood and limbs and even one's life, for the good of others without expecting anything in return". (From the viewpoint of doing good to others, this is not wrong. If a small baby falls into a well or tank, one has to save the child even if one loses one's own life in such an attempt. One should have this kind of view to help others. But if one does not properly understand the context, it may lead to foolish sacrifices).

(3) **"Upekka** is detachment as distinguished from indifference. It is a state of mind where there is neither like nor dislike." (How can a person, who has neither like or dislike, love 'good' and reject 'evil'? How can a person, who is detached, acquire good character? How can he save himself when he is in difficulty? This principle will merely harm its follower).

(4) **"Nekkhama** is renunciation of the pleasures of the world". (We can't discuss this point unless we know what the 'pleasures of the world' are. There are no details about those pleasures).

(5) **"Virya** is right endeavour. It is doing with all your might whatever you have undertaken to do with never a thought of turning back, whatever you have undertaken to do." (We can hardly understand this without examples).

(6) **"Khanti** is forbearance. Not to meet hatred by hatred is the essence of it. For hatred is not appeased by hatred. It is appeased only by forbearance." (In the formulation 'hatred is not appeased by hatred', if the former is hatred, the latter—which is only a response to it—cannot

be called hatred. It would be 'self-protection'. If there were no former hatred, there won't be latter hatred. One has to refer to the former hatred and advise people not to have hatred. To advice not to show hatred to those who hate them is to advise them to surrender to the former hatred!)

(7) **Succa:** Always speak truth. Don't lie. (To those who propound this principle, we must tell the truth of 'exploitation of labour'. Then we will know how far they will accept this truth. The truth of 'exploitation of labour' pales vis-a-vis Ambedkar!)

(8) **"Adhithama** is resolute determination to reach the goal." (But one's goals can be either good or bad. Is it a goal in self-interest or a goal that aims at the welfare of all people, or a goal that is necessary for self-protection? There are so many different goals. Every one considers his own goal good. But it is not the touchstone. Resolute determination to reach the goal will do good only if the goal is good. If the goal is bad, the absence of resolute determination itself will do good!

(9) **"Karuna** is loving kindness to human beings." (This is a good quality. But it is not kindness if people, who show kindness to fellow human beings, do not realize that others are in a miserable condition that expects kindness, that such a condition is not a matter of self-respect and none should show kindness to others. Such kindness will not help any one).

(10) **"Matri** is extending fellow feeling to all beings, not only to one who is a friend but also to one who is a foe: not only to man but to all living beings." (Fellow feeling for enemies! Where is the question of fellow feelings to an enemy? One should either say 'don't have enmity at all' or 'be a refined person and don't be cruel when you want to show anger toward your enemy'. But we should not advise others to love their enemies. 'Fellow feeling' toward all living beings is a quality that human beings have to acquire. But when 'self-protection' becomes inevitable, fellow feeling towards poisonous creatures and wild animals is not possible. Therefore, the principle that 'fellow-feeling to all living beings' simply cannot apply to all situations. Yet it is a good quality that human beings should necessarily acquire).

With this the path of virtue is over. So far we have examined all the three paths: purity, righteousness and virtue.

Purity, righteousness and virtue are all the same. The difference is only terminological. If we follow one path, it amounts to following all the other paths. The essence of all these paths is ' be good'. This is the main essence of these paths.

"Man is what his mind makes him." (p. 359). The basis for good or bad behaviour of human beings is the mind. Hence, we have to make

mind good. We need to train it. The paths of purity, righteousness and virtue give such training. This is Buddha's meaning.

If man behaves in accordance with the mind, what is the basis for mind's behaviour? Why does it think badly in the first place? Nowhere do we find an explanation for this. At best, we may find the answer, 'because of selfishness'.

In this manner, Buddha told the sanyasis that in order to behave properly, human beings should train their minds and that is the core of his doctrine!

Another name for the path of purity is 'Panch Sila'. Another name for the path of righteousness is 'Ashtanga Marga'. Another name for the path of virtue is 'Paramitas'. "His (Buddha's) religion emphasizes Panch Sila, the Ashtanga Marga and the Paramitas" (p. 283). Buddha, however, mentioned his doctrine as 'Ashtanga Marga'.

The new wisdom (enlightenment) which Buddha attained during his 4-week meditation under a Banyan tree along the wide road to Gaya was—this Ashtanga Marga!

According to Buddha this is 'complete knowledge'! New knowledge! He is Buddha because this knowledge dawned on him. 'Buddha' means a person who obtained enlightenment! One who has awakened!

Since his enlightenment occurred under the Banyan tree, the tree is called 'Bodhi tree'!

Ambedkar called this tree 'Banyan tree'. Some people call it 'Fig tree'. Whether Banyan or Fig, its specialty is its big size. People glorify trees, hills, rivers and everything that is of a big size. They treat them as holy things, worship them. But, however large a tree may be, in fact it can neither be holier nor greater than a straw.

We don't get 'new knowledge' by merely sitting under a tree and meditate. We may come to know new things if we read many books, discuss things with knowledgeable people, conduct research or do some such thing. Thus our knowledge may increase. But if we sit under a tree or on a hill, facing east and do experiments in breathing with left nose or right nose, we don't get any new knowledge but lose our brain. But Ambedkar depicted this with great admiration:

> "On the night of the last day of the fourth week light dawned upon him... So in the end, after meditation for four weeks, darkness was dispelled, light arose, ignorance was dispelled and knowledge arose. He saw a new way" (p. 75).

Dawning of knowledge, Buddha, Bodhi (Banyan) tree—all these words are contradictory to rationalism. This is Puranic terminology. This is a narration in terms of religious stories and mythological language!

The actual fact is, a person called Gautama expressed certain rational ideas. This is the essence. That is how we must look at the whole matter.

There are two clear-cut differences between Vedic religion and Buddhism. While Vedic religion is based on superstitious notions concerning 'nature' like god, heaven and hell, Buddhism is based on reason and logic. This is one distinction.

Concerning society, the Vedic religion preaches, 'worship God! Worship! Worship!' Except this, it does not give any other progrmme to human beings. But, on the other hand, Buddha preaches human beings to reform themselves: "Be good! Don't do evil things! Be kind! Have forbearance!'

In this manner, Buddhism began with rejection of Vedic religion and taught the path of reason and refinement to human beings.

However, the question to be put to Buddhism is 'will human beings be free from suffering if they follow the path of righteousness?' Buddha emphatically claimed that his religion (Dhamma) would remove suffering.

Ambedkar too assures us that Buddha's doctrine will remove suffering and sorrow from the world.

> "Such is the gospel the Buddha enunciated as a result of his enlightenment to end the sorrow and misery in the world" (Vol. 3, p. 450).

We must now examine how far this is valid.

5) Will Buddha's 'Path' remove suffering?

During Buddha's time society was based on exploitation. In this society, all *land* was under the control of slave masters as their own personal property. Whoever owned that property were masters. Those who did not own land were slaves and servants ('work folk'). (There are no details about the differences between slaves and workfolk in these stories). Society was already split into classes by then. State power and monarchies that defended the property rights of the masters were already established. Slave/ servant men and women did all the labours necessary for the maintenance of the families of the master. They alone did the agriculture work; they reared the cattle; they wove cloth, stitched shoes, built houses, drove carts, pulled boats and excavated mines. They also did all kinds of labour in the homes of masters.

Out of the total labour which the slaves did, the very least portion came to them and they lost the remaining whole. Suppose the value of a day's labour of a slave is 10 and he receives only 2, his *surplus labour* will be 8. This goes to the master. If the family of a master has 10 slaves, the value of the labour that the family receives will be: 10×8=80. If the family has 50 slaves the labour that it gets will be 50×8=400. The more the number of slaves the more the mass of products that the family gets.

The family of the master uses all kinds of products without doing any labour whatsoever. It does not engage in agriculture, yet consumes all the foodstuffs. It does not weave cloth, yet wears clothes. It does not make shoes, yet wears them. It does not construct houses, yet lives in elaborate buildings. In this manner, it uses all products without doing a single labour. Slaves alone perform labour.

Of the products that it gets from the slaves' labour, the master's family uses comfortably as many products as necessary and earns 'money' by selling the remaining products. This means, if the master's family has money, it is nothing but the labour of the slaves. Surplus labour of slaves is the wealth of the masters.

It means, the real cause of the riches and poverty is 'exploitation of labour'. Those who lose their labour live in poverty and those who exploit others' labour live in riches.

Masters possess all rights including the right to property. Slaves do not have any rights. They don't have right even over their bodies.

All the slaves could, of course, unite and revolt against the masters and occupy the land. If that happens, it will be 'class struggle'. It will be the concluding phase of the system of slavery. As long as it does not happen, all an individual slave can do is to bear out the suffering. Or, to flee into forests. Then the hunting dogs of the masters would be ready to search the slave, catch him and tear him apart. Even if this does not happen, the slave is sure to be at the mercy of wild animals in the forest.

Slaves have to obediently serve their masters as long as they are physically fit and eventually perish with hunger, disease and sorrow.

If we examine the condition of the class of masters, it will have two kinds of problems (1) How to spend time? (2) How to spend money? As this class does not do any labour, there is no scope for it to spend time in labour. It ought to have some way to spend its time. Hence it has invented luxuries, gambling and addictions of all sorts! All these are essential for the leisure of the class that does not labour.

Secondly every year new wealth (new surplus labour of slaves) accrues to this class. This class alone has to spend the whole of it. If the

master's family leads a simple life with only a pair of clothes a year, a small cot, moderate quantity of food and a pair of shoes, it will be sunk neck deep in the wealth which it can't spend. If it wants to spend the masses of labour that it grabs, it will be made possible only by means of luxuries. It is not possible by means of a simple way of life. If this class too were to live on its own labour, its labour will suffice for its maintenance. Then a situation will not arise in which excess wealth accumulates. But, as this class lives by grabbing of others' labour instead of living on its own labour, luxuries become inevitable for expenditure of that wealth.

No matter how much wealth and riches he possesses, a master may have some sorrows as well: sorrows connected with property, namely, that he incurred some loss of property, that his property has not increased, that his fellow master has become richer than him, and so on. As Buddha said to King Bimbisara,

> "When they have obtained all the earth girdled by the sea, kings wish to conquer the other side of the great ocean" (p. 50).

Similarly, the sole ultimate goal of a master is to expand his property!

Buddha's teaching rejects not only the superstitions of Vedic religion but also the anarchic freedom of wealthy life. For example: "eschew both scents and wreaths" (p. 392); "abstain from ornaments and decorating" (p.416); "abstain from the love of gold and silver" (p. 416); "hunting is unrighteousness" (p. 385); gambling, debauchery and drinking are vices that lead to downfall (p. 379). All these sermons apply only to the lives of the rich people. But, in essence, there cannot be much difference between the behaviour of rich and poor. If the rich people wear gold, diamonds and precious stones, the poor wear cheap metals, bangles and beads. The essence of their desires is the same. If the rich pass their time with expensive addictions, the poor enjoy cheap addictions.

The rich class, of course, also is the ruling class. The ideas of the ruling class are the ideas of the ruled class. That is why, the behaviour of both the classes is essentially the same. But the life of the rich is the root of any evil phenomenon. Addictions and luxuries first begin in the life of the rich and they spread to the life of the poor in changed forms. When we are not clear about rich-poor differences, the identical behaviour of rich and poor appears to be natural. Hence, it seems as if all people require the same kind of teaching.

If we look at the Ashtanga Marga of Buddha superficially, all its aspects seem good. There is nothing wrong in those sermons, namely, human beings should perform good deeds. They should not perform bad

deeds. They should not utter falsehood, should not steal, should not abuse others, and should not lead a luxurious life. They should love all living beings.

But Buddha himself says that 'the world is full of suffering' (p. 121). And yet, while slaves' suffering is connected with minimum subsistence and self-protection, the suffering of the master is connected with the increase of his property and his desire to live the life of an idler.

Buddha treats these two kinds of sufferings as though they were the same. He suggests Ashtanga Marga as the solution for the sufferings of all people. How does this Marga (path) remove suffering? This is the real question.

Let us first consider the situation of a slave:

Suppose a slave follows faithfully the path of 'Ashtanga Marga'. That is, he does not speak untruth. He doesn't steal. He doesn't indulge in debauchery. He doesn't consume intoxicants. He doesn't cause any harm to others' life. He doesn't perform rites, sacrifices, yagas, etc. He doesn't rely on an astrologer or palmist. He doesn't believe in supernatural powers. He doesn't speak harshly to others. He doesn't hanker after comforts. He never hunts. He doesn't even kill an ant. He is very kind to all living beings. Whenever human beings or animals are in danger, he tries to protect them even at the risk of his own life. He is zealous to observe all the principles of the paths of purity, righteousness and virtue. Yet, let us say, he continuous to be a slave as ever. He continues to live as before with hunger, disease, difficulties and risk of life. Will the Ashtanga Marga remove his suffering?

Let is also examine the situation of the master:

The master too does not speak lies. He doesn't steal; doesn't indulge in debauchery, doesn't take intoxicants, doesn't perform sacrifices, doesn't worship gods and Agnihotras (sacred fire). He does not seek foretelling palmistry and mantras. He does not wear garlands and ornaments; doesn't apply scents, doesn't do harm to others' life. He never hunts. He does not torture animals. He does not speak harshly even to his slaves. He behaves in accordance with the paths of purity, righteousness and virtue. But he does not do any labour. He gets all labours done by the slaves. He does not give a single inch of his land to slaves. He does not give them any other rights either. He continues to buy and sell them (slaves) as before. He continues to possess fertile lands rich with crops, cattle herds, mansions, flower gardens, horse-driven carriages and everything. However self-controlled he is, the master will have his own worries that his property

has not increased or run-away slave has caused great deal of loss. Will the Ashtanga Marga free him from his suffering?

In the relation between master and slaves, the suffering of the slave is due to the master only. But, the suffering of the master is not caused by the slave. If the master becomes sorrowful on the ground that his slave did not work loyally and as a result he incurred some loss of property, the slave is not responsible for that. The master himself is responsible for his own suffering. This means, it is the master who is responsible for the sufferings of both the slave as well as the master.

When both a master and a slave live in such a relation and follow the Ashtanga Marga by not speaking untruth, not stealing, not taking intoxicants, not speaking harshly, not wearing wreaths and ornaments and by not torturing animals, will they be free from suffering? Will they be free from worries? And will amity and affection form between the two?

6) Does Rationalism apply only to 'Nature'?

Let us suppose that both sides in the relation between master and slave suffer and each side has its own worries. But the Ashtanga Marga will not be of any use to remove their sorrow.

To remove the sorrow of the slave, we have to remove the conditions whereby a slave exists. Ashtanga Marga does not offer this solution. Hence, there is no use of Ashtanga Marga for the slaves.

To remove the sorrow of the master, his property should daily increase and there should be no problems and dissatisfaction concerning property. But, the Ashtanga Marga does not give any ideas as to how to increase property. Hence, the Ashtanga Marga is useless for the masters as well.

However devotedly the two sides may follow Ashtanga Marga, each side will continue to have problems; each one will have his own sorrow. If both sides have to be freed from the sorrow, the relation which forms the basis of that sorrow has to be abolished. The relation—whereby one person occupies *land* as his private property and does not perform labour in his capacity as a master, while another person lives the life of a slave who lacks all means of production for himself and labours solely for the benefit of the master. Both persons should become equal in the sense that both do labour and both use land freely. Then a slave would not be a slave. The condition would cease to exist whereby he has to experience slavery and poverty. Similarly, a master would not be a master. Then he would not have to exercise cruelty in carrying out his masterhood, not suffer from avarice to increase property, not come into conflict with slaves and not suffer sorrows that result from such situations.

When the condition of both the sides becomes one, equality and amity will exist between them. It follows that the removal of sorrow and problems of human society is not something that can be achieved by superficial moral sermons like 'don't speak untruth, don't take intoxicants, don't lead a luxurious life, love all living beings and so on! When we find slavery on one side and domination on the other, poverty on one side and riches on the other, when we find gambling, addiction, avarice, jealousy, deep seated aggressive animosity and if all these evils have to perish and love and affection are to be established, it is clear that Buddha's Panch Sheel, Ashtanga Marga and Paramitas will not help at all! We, however, should not criticise Buddha for preaching superficial sermons and for not talking about exploitation of labour which is the root cause of all. For though exploitation of labour must have been taking place during Buddha's time as well, it was impossible for him to grasp it at that time. Even if Marx had been present at that time, he too could not have grasped it since there were no appropriate conditions that enable him to understand it.

In order to understand the phenomenon of exploitation of labour, the situation should be such that every aspect concerning labour should appear in terms of money calculations. This means, when a person performs labour, the value of the means of labour, the value of raw materials, the value of the means of subsistence of the labouring person, the value of the products which he produces afresh and the value of various portions which gets distributed under various names—all these aspects should appear in terms of money.

This means that products in all branches of production should have prices and they should be sold out. Whatever the slave receives for his maintenance, it should be in the form of *wage* and money calculation. Only when all these conditions exist, is it possible to grasp whether the value of labour which the slave does for the master and the value of the wage which the master gives are equal. But all these conditions were not yet present in slave society. Especially, there was no system of wages for slaves. The system of sale of products was present only in certain branches and not in many branches. Under these conditions, the grasp of a person, however intellectual he might be, would stop within the boundaries of the given situation. This means, under such conditions, it is not possible to grasp the fact of exploitation of labour by means of logic. It would be possible only when minimally required conditions emerge.

Even under 'feudal' society, conditions did not emerge. The feudal peasants too did not have the system of 'wages'. The sale of products exists only in certain branches and not in many branches. If all these conditions emerge, it would thenceforth be capitalist society. Here the

system of wages for labourers would begin. We find sale of products in many branches. Every aspect concerning products would be in terms of 'money calculations'.

So what we need here is a person or persons who can examine all the existing conditions in a systematic manner. Marx carried out this job. He, without any fear to accept the truth, could get hold of the phenomenon of 'exploitation of labour'.

This is how it happened. Suppose the production of an article involves an expenditure of Rs.4 on the means of production and Rs.6 on the wages of labourers. The total is 10. This is 'capital'. Suppose the capitalist sold the product for 18. After deducting 10 capital from 18, the capitalist got a 'surplus' of 8. Now the question arises, 'how did this surplus come?' While this is so, 'value means labour' according to the 'law of value'. Any item that does not involve labour will not value. According to this law, it will be clear that rent, interest and profit are unconnected with labour, that they are merely incomes connected with rights of property in land and capital. If we can understand all these details, it will be clear that the 8 surplus too is the fruit of the labour of labourers.

This means that the actual value of the labour of labourers is: 6 wages + 8 surplus = 14. Which means, labourers performed a labour of 14 value and received only 6 as wage. They do not know about 8. Not only labourers but also capitalists do not know about it. The 8 value which labourers did not receive will be distributed as incomes called 'rent, interest and profit'. These incomes are those which are received without performing any labour at all. In this manner, of the many things which Marx could discover, surplus value is the crucial one. The entire secret of 'exploitation of labour' is hidden in this.

It became possible to discover this only under 'capitalism'. Suppose the same production of 18 value took place in a slave society. Even in that society, let us say, all the expenses connected with that production were similar to those in the present example. That is, even at that time, slaves performed a labour of 14 value, received articles of 6 value and lost the remaining 8. But it is not possible to anyone in that society to realize that this had happened. It is because there we don't find money calculations to any item. The means of subsistence given to slaves will not be in the form of money but in the form of articles. Those articles do not have prices. Similarly, there won't be money calculations concerning the expenses spent for products which the slaves produced afresh. As the master does not sell the newly produced articles to outsiders, their value is not known. This means that there won't be conditions necessary to grasp the facts, namely, 'the master initially spent that much and he got this

much as surplus' or 'the slaves performed labour of so much value but they received back only this much value'. It was the time when the system of wages for labourers and the system of selling commodities of all branches of production had not yet emerged. That is why, it was not possible for any one to discover the fact of exploitation of labour. An intellectual of that time like Aristotle could not grasp this fact either. Buddha belonged to a time earlier than Aristotle. We cannot and should not criticise Buddha who belonged to such a remote past on the ground that he did not speak of exploitation of labour and he only preached superficial sermons.

We can, however, criticise Buddha on such issues in which we find contradiction in his words or actions. For example, when he was young, Buddha said, 'how can it be right that the labourer should toil and the master should live on the fruits of his labour?' (Here Ambedkar or the original text on which Ambedkar based his account must have mistakenly used the word 'labourer'. This is because we can't find system of wages during Buddha's time, can we?) Why didn't Buddha, who in youth was upset and spoke of an injustice, never again speak of it when he became older and acquired the wisdom by which he could enlighten all human kind? We can and should put this question to Buddha. Buddha said so many things such as 'don't do this, don't do that'. Why didn't he say that 'the master should not enjoy the fruit of the labour of labourers, he has to live on the fruit of his own labour'. What does it mean that Buddha, who felt that injustice was being done to labourers, did not mention that fact in his Ashtanga Marga? Does it mean that he had real concern for those who are subjected to that injustice? We can raise such questions.

Well, let us once again return to the point of Buddha's enlightenment. Buddha is still preaching his sermons to the sanyasis. At one point he says,

> "why do men not mind enslaving or dominating others? Why do men not mind making the lives of others unhappy? Is it not because men are not righteous in their conduct towards one another?" (p. 128-9).

Man does not hesitate to enslave or dominate others because he will gain from that. It is because he can live without doing any labour. He can make propertyless persons his slaves and become a master only when he occupies all the means of production including *land.*

Though he did not know this reason, Buddha could say whatever he could. Buddha himself was saying that enslaving and dominating others is not a justifiable behaviour, wasn't he? Then why didn't he include in his Ashtanga Marga the point that 'no man should enslave another man and that he should free the slaves under his control'? He simply asks, 'is this not injustice? Is this not injustice?' But he has not said in his theory that 'men should not do this injustice'. Just as he said that 'don't speak

untruth, don't take intoxicants', he could as well have said 'don't keep slaves with you'. He could say this since he himself considered it an injustice. But he didn't say so. Why? Because masters would not have liked it?

Further, Buddha at one place says, "I recognize the earth as earth. But I have no craving for it" (p. 589). Well, then, he should have said the same thing in the Ashtanga Marga, shouldn't he?

He could have said, 'treat earth as earth. Don't crave to own it as your property'. But he didn't say so. Except sermons like 'don't speak untruth', we do not find a single utterance concerning land or slaves in his Ashtanga Marga.

Concerning the *poor*, he says as follows at one place:

> "Is not Dana necessary to remove the suffering of the needy and the poor and to promote general good? Is not Karuna necessary to be drawn to the relief of poverty and suffering wherever it exists?" (p. 129).

'Relief' to the poor! This means, reducing the suffering to some extent! There was no scope for Buddha to say more than this. When one does not know why poverty exists, he won't know that 'it is possible to remove poverty'. Riches and poverty appear as natural as light and darkness. When poverty appears as an inevitable phenomenon, the only thing that can be done is to try to reduce that hardship to some extent. Hence, Buddha could say to that extent only.

If Buddha says, that one has to give Dana (charity) to the poor, he would be a 'kind' hearted person. But, if an educated person recommends Buddha's path today, even after the secret of exploitation of labour has been exposed, he ought to become an 'unkind' person toward the poor.

A person who is a rationalist should be able to think rationally not only about Nature but also about society. Logic or reasoning is not merely realization of the fact that 'there are no supernatural forces in Nature; there are no heaven and hell'. A rationalist must have the logic concerning the lives of human beings as well. But, correct logic concerning society might not have existed during Buddha's time. Was it absent even during Ambedkar's time?

Of the sorrow existing in the world, some part is simply unnecessary. It is the sorrow of idlers. The remaining sorrow is real sorrow. The solution for this is revolt against exploitative property relations! All this Buddha did not know. He preached Panch Sila, Ashtanga Marga and Paramitas and considered what he preached great knowledge. He thought he had discovered a new path. He further gave his sermons to those sanyasis at length.

The sanyasis who heard all his *sermons of knowledge* praised Buddha a lot, 'Oh! How great is this theory! So far we have not been aware of such a great path that can remove human suffering!' They did not ask Buddha any question. But those sanyasis, after having heard everything, should have asked a question as follows: 'You say that human beings are not conducting themselves good and they should behave well, don't you? What is the reason for people's misconduct? They tell lies, steal, take intoxicants, live with addictions and luxuries. They fight with one another. Why do they do all these things? Simply due to lack of knowledge? Will they stop all the activities if we explain the truth? Or is human psychology itself bad? If character itself is bad, can we change it? Or, are human beings behaving so due to any other reason? What is the real reason? Tell us what is the reason for the evil behaviour of human beings?' But the Sanyasis had no such questions. They thought that the nature of human beings is such. They behave badly. Buddha is preaching so as to rectify their behaviour'.

Buddha's theory impressed them a lot. They 'at once surrendered to him and requested him to accept them as his disciples' (p. 132).

It is no wonder that the Sanyasis have no doubts about Buddha's doctrine. But Ambedkar, who belonged to the present time, has no doubts either. He does not raise the question, 'why do human beings behave badly?' He does not raise such questions as, 'If rich people too have sorrow, what sort of sorrow is it? Who is responsible for that?' Also he does not ask, 'How can Ashtanga Marga remove the sorrow of slaves?'

Further, he has no such questions as follows: 'what path removed the sorrows of slaves in the countries where slavery existed: the struggles of slaves or Ashtanga Marga? Did Buddha's path remove the sorrow of people of any country during the past 2,500 years? Not only here but also in the subsequent story of Buddha nowhere does Ambedkar raise any question, even when he comes across most surprising incidents. Moreover, he ignores others' criticism of Buddha and is zealous to establish that Buddha's path alone is a panacea of all kinds of sorrow.

We need to raise an important question concerning Ambedkar's attitude to Buddha's doctrine. Why did he not prescribe Ashtanga Marga as a solution for the sorrow of untouchables? When he realized that there was no greater path than Ashtanga Marga, why did he, instead, suggest this 'mundane' path of 'reservations, special provisions' and so on? Why didn't he give up the path of reservations for untouchables even after studying Buddha's doctrine and arriving at a definite conclusion that Buddha's doctrine alone is the path of emancipation? Was he not confident of Buddha's doctrine? Shouldn't any one confront with this question Ambedkar?

7) Disciples begin to join

Disciples began to join Buddha. They were of two categories: Upasakas and Bhikkus. Upasakas may follow Buddha Dhamma while leading a family life. They may own property. Whereas Bhikkus should abandon family life, shave their heads, wear saffron robes, remain celibate and live on alms alone. Their duty was to propagate Buddha's doctrine by preaching the Ashtanga Marga and by leading the higher life of a Sanyasi.

Buddha started a 'Sangh' for the sake of Bhikkus. Upasakas did not belong to Sangh because they did not propagate Buddha's doctrine.

There are no restrictions of caste or sex on those who wish to become Bhikkus. (In the beginning, Buddha strongly opposed admitting women as Bhikkus. That is a different matter).

> "No Bhikku is to possess more than the following eight articles:— (1)Three pieces of cloth to cover his body: (i) lower garments called Antarvaska. (ii) upper garment called Uttarasang. (iii) covering garment against cold called Sanghati. (2) A girdle for the loins. (3) An alms-bowl. (4) A razor. (5) A needle. (6) A water-strainer" (p.418).

He has to follow Trisaras: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangh. If a Bhikku commits an offence, the other Bhikkus should conduct a trial and award an appropriate punishment, namely, warning and eventual discharge or expulsion from the Sangh.

This means that it is possible that Bhikkus may involve accepting gifts, buying and selling land and appropriation of property of the Sangh. This means Sangh also accumulates property!

This is how Buddha Dhamma and a Sangh that preaches it began.

8) The life of Sanyasis is a life based on exploitation of labour

The life of a Sanyasi is, in fact, contrary to the rest of human life because a sanyasi does not do any labour to maintain himself. When a person wants to propagate his theory, he ought to do so while maintaining himself. If he has to conduct his propaganda secretly and has to lead an underground life, he cannot pursue any occupation openly. But, this does not apply to such propaganda as is not secret in nature. As the life of a sanyasis is not a secret life, he can maintain himself by doing some labour for some time. If we live without doing labour, it is exploitation of labour.

No person has a right to live without doing any labour at any time except in childhood, state of ill-health and old age. No matter how great a Sanyasi is, if he does not perform any labour, it amounts to living on exploitation. (There was a criticism on Buddha that he lived like a 'parasite'. We will see this point later).

Buddha was a rationalist. To be rational was his trait. He did not accept the existence of god, supernatural powers and superstitious beliefs. But all those, including Ambedkar, who claim to be disciples of Buddha themselves entertained superstitious beliefs! They did not have a rationalist outlook in any sense! They filled Buddha's biography with vulgar stories. Such people are, indeed, totally unfit to be disciples of Buddha!

9) Disciples intoxicated with wealth

"There lived in the town of Benares a nobleman's son called Yashas... He lived in abounding wealth" (If some one has wealth, Ambedkar apparently does not have opposition to use the word 'nobleman's son'). Yashas passed his time like a swinger for years in drinking, dancing and 'carnal pleasures'. Finally, bored with his swinging life-style he joined as Buddha's disciple and became a Sanyasi.

"Four friends of Yashas belonging to the wealthy family" too did the same thing. (These wealthy fellows neither did any labour earlier nor would do any labour after becoming sanyasis. It makes no difference).

In Benaras, there were three sanyasi-brothers of Kassyapa family. They were called 'Jatila' sanyasis because of their long hair. They perform fire worship. Each one of them has his own Ashram. (Possession of an Ashram by a sanyasi surely implies possession of property). There were about a thousand disciples with these three brothers. (All a band of idlers). Besides these disciples, hundreds of devotees visit the Ashrams (these devotees are the only source of 'donations' to these Ashrams. All the donations make up the *earning* of the Ashrams!) Of the three brothers, the elder fellow had a reputation of a 'great sanyasi'. Buddha thought of converting this reputed sanyasi into his path by preaching his doctrine to him and hence went to his Ashram.

Every night a 'savage Naga king' would come into that Ashram and trouble the inmates. (There are no details whether that Naga king was a human being or a snake). Buddha, even after hearing about the Naga king, stayed in the Ashram on one night without fear.

The Naga king came at mid-night. Fascinated by the glowing face

of Buddha, he began to worship the lord. All people in the Ashram witnessed the scene and realized the greatness of Buddha. (Is it necessary to understand the doctrine of a rationalist by means of a 'miracle'?)

Later Buddha told them that it was futile to perform fire-worship and Agnihotra cannot cleanse the sins of man. He further said that if man conquers lust, anger and delusion he would acquire true vision, knowledge and pure conduct. In this manner, when once one develops distaste for sin, this distaste removes covetous desire and thereby one is able to become recluse. ('Covetous desire' is desire for something which does not belong to one, that is 'desire for others' property'. Others' property means others' labour. A fellow who became a recluse still continues to consume others' labour. This means that unless one knows the truth concerning 'labour', no discourse of Dhamma would save him from sin).

All the three Kassyapa brothers abandoned fire worship and became Buddha's disciples. Here Ambedkar comments:

> "The conversion of the Kassyapas was a great triumph for the Blessed Lord. For they had a very strong hold on the imagination of the people" (p. 140-41).

This means, ordinary people follow Buddha's path because of the Kassyapas. Here, what is Buddha Dhamma? That one should not have 'covetous desire' for others' property! But it is not the ordinary people who have covetous desire for others' property. They always lose their property (their labour) to others. Therefore, there is nothing that ordinary people can learn from Buddha concerning covetous desire for others' property. Did Buddha's doctrine do good to ordinary people by asking the rich to *abandon their property*? No, there is no such thing in it. Therefore, Buddha's doctrine is of no use to ordinary people.

Sariputta and Moggallana were Brahmin sanyasis. They had been following another Guru (teacher). Having heard about Buddha, one day they took 250 companions and proceeded to visit Buddha. Buddha saw them coming from afar and said to his disciples around him: look at those two companions!

> "These will be my chief pair of disciples, and auspicious pair" (p. 143).

They have not yet come close! They have not yet asked him to admit them as his disciples. He says that the newly arriving persons are 'auspicious' and 'chief' disciples compared to the disciples who were already with him. The teacher himself says all this to the disciples who are around him! Moreover those coming toward him were not simply two

persons but 250 persons! All of them were coming to join as his disciples! Yet Buddha has no concern for them. He has special attention for their *leaders*. If you catch hold of leaders, you can get easily all those who are under their control, can't you? This was Buddha's 'pure conduct'.

What is the use of such stories as these except to defame Buddha? A disciple like Ambedkar too has not observed minimum fairness while narrating Buddha's story. This did not occur even to Ambedkar: 'Is it a fair thing to humiliate the old disciples by praising new persons as 'auspicious'? He could not understand what is fair and what is unfair.

Well, all of them who came asked Buddha to admit them as his disciples. Buddha admitted all the 250 Parivrajakas along with Sariputta and Moggallana by uttering the usual formula "Ehi Bhikku" (Come Monks!). Then how far is it justifiable not to treat all persons equal but to glorify only two of them as his chief and auspicious disciples?

Bimbisara was the king of Magadha. Rajagraha was his capital. Do you know how many wives he had? Do you think he had two or three wives? Or do you think he had ten wives? He had 500 wives! (p. 152). This is what Ambedkar tells us!

This king asked Buddha to admit him as his disciple. How nice it would have been if Buddha had scolded him: 'How dare you desire to become my disciple when you have 500 wives?' Buddha, who emphasized that one should not even touch woman without real love and that one should not indulge in lust, admitted His Royal Highness Bimbisara, who had 500 wives! This means, it is a new doctrine of Buddha according to which kings can exhibit 'truthful love' for hundreds of women and it does not amount to 'lust'!

As all the converted persons need not become sanyasis, His Excellency Bimbisara, though converted, remained King as before. All his properties remained his! Peasants continued to pay rent to him! Slaves continued to do service both at home and outside! Wives continued to suffocate in the harems! For the king, every thing goes smoothly and happily! Yet he became a 'disciple' of Buddha! His Excellency the King knows pretty well that he has no need either to acquire fresh knowledge or give up anything for the sake of his discipleship. He need not give up his properties. He need not give up his servants. He need not give up his wives. Moreover he can increase everything. It is enough if he throws donations to the Buddhist Sangh! Well, how difficult will it be for the king to practice discipleship of Buddha? Ambedkar had indescribable respect for king Bimbisara. In Ambedkar's view, this king was a 'great

supporter of Dhamma' (p.473). Ambedkar, named his house in Bombay 'Rajagraha', the name of the capital city of this king. Ambedkar had so much respect for this king who had 500 wives.

Buddha was not concerned even if kings committed any sort of crime. He can embrace a king who killed his own father. The story of Bimbisara tells that Ajatsatru killed his father, the king Bimbisara.

> "When Bimbisara died Jeevaka continued to serve his son Ajatsatru and was mainly instrumental in bringing him to the Lord after his crime of parricide" (p. 153).

It was Jeevaka, a physician to the king, who negotiated with Buddha to admit Ajatsatru as his disciple. Here we are concerned not with Jeevaka but rather with Buddha! Whenever he opened mouth, Buddha would speak of 'Morality! Morality! Love! Love!' Such a person admitted a mean fellow who killed his own father as his disciple. He thought that the reason that 'he has changed' would suffice to save him. Once you killed your father and sat on the throne, you could express your repentance to any extent. This new king too has changed like that. The one who is smoldering with repentance is the King who currently in power. Then how can Buddha not believe His Royal Highness?

This means Buddha had embraced the father-killer, admitted him as a disciple, and said 'don't worry my boy! It doesn't matter even if you have killed your father! Anyway you are repenting deeply now'!

Buddha, how moralistic you were in your youth! How sensitive you were! Did you not realize exactly how far this obsession for enlightenment had taken you? Those who flutter with hundreds of women are also your disciples! Those who kill their parents for property too are your disciples! Those who sink slaves in the sea of sorrow too are your disciples! How much moral enlightenment can you give to the world with this immoral band of disciples? Why have you—who stood with unshaken ideals as Goutama—fallen to such depths? What did you expect? How nice it would be if you knew the path of your own liberation before you found the path of liberation of other human beings!

Sudatta was the wealthiest person in the Kosala kingdom. He was the treasurer of the king. (Well, then, what is the problem? Everything perhaps goes straight to his house from the treasury!) Besides all this he had large commercial interests. He had many servants under him. His another name is Anathapindika since, it is said, he was very kind to the poor! (The poor are 'anathas' or 'orphans'!)

Once this wealthy person came to Buddha and expressed his desire to hear Buddha's sermons on spiritual matters. Buddha explained his rational philosophy.

> "Neither Ishavara, nor the Absolute, nor the self, nor causeless chance, is the maker, but our deeds produce results both good and evil" (pp.147-8).

He also said that it is better to stop worshipping Ishavara.

Concerning the conduct of human beings Buddha said: 'God had not created human beings. God had not created the joy and sorrow of human beings. Human beings themselves are creating them. Human beings create not only joy but also sorrow. He suggested the 'Ashtanga Marga' as the path to freedom from sorrow.

Buddha did not know the distinctions (classes) among human beings. He did not know even the distinction between the sorrow of the rich and the poor. It is a correct reasoning to say that 'god had not created joy and sorrow because god does not exist'. But what does it mean to say that 'human beings themselves create their sorrow'? According to this argument, we may have to arrive at the conclusion that 'slaves are creating sorrow for themselves'.

Does Buddha in fact mean the following? 'Yes, slaves are responsible for their sorrow. They can be free from slavery if they fight against masters, can't they? So aren't they responsible for their sorrow if they don't fight and remain slaves?' If this is Buddha's intention, he ought to have preached 'revolt' as a way to get rid of that sorrow. He should have said: 'Rebel wherever there is domination! Fight! Rebellion is the only way to eliminate sorrow. If you don't fight, it means that you are perpetuating your sorrow'. But Buddha did not preach 'rebellion'. He preached only Ashtanga Marga as a means to eliminate sorrow. This means, Buddha did not know the real causes of the sorrow. After hearing Buddha's discourse on religious matters, Anathapindika put forward his personal problem before Buddha:

> "My life is full of work, and having acquired great wealth, I am surrounded with cares. Yet do I enjoy my work, and I apply myself to it with all diligence. Many people are in my employ and depend upon the success of my enterprises" (p. 148).

(Every master always talks like this. Instead of thinking that his entire life is dependent on his workmen, he believes that his workmen are dependent on him).

> "My heart yearns to do what is right and to be a blessing unto my fellow-beings. Let me then ask you, must I give up my wealth, my home, and

my business enterprises, and, like you, go into homelessness in order to attain the bliss of a religious life?" (p. 148).

This means, he asked Buddha whether he should give up his wealth and his present way of life.

Would you like to know what Buddha then said in response? He said a great deal, but briefly: Those who are not slaves to riches but use it properly are friends of fellow human beings. So, continue in your occupation and carry on your business with diligence.

> "It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life and wealth and power. The Bhikku who retires from the world in order to lead a life of leisure will have no gain. For a life of indolence is an abomination, and lack of energy is to be despised. The Dhamma of the Tathagata does not require a man to go into homelessness or to resign the world unless he feels called upon to do so: what the Dhamma of the Tathagata requires is for every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to cleanse his heart, to give up his thirst for pleasure, and lead a life of righteousness. And whatever men do, whether they remain in the world as artisans, merchants, and officers of the king, or retire from the world and devote themselves to a life of religious meditation, let them put their whole heart into their task; let them be diligent and energetic, and, if they are like the lotus, which, though it grows in the water, yet remains untouched by the water, if they struggle in life without cherishing envy or hatred, if they live in the world a life not of self but a life of truth, then surely joy, peace, and bliss will dwell in their minds" (pp. 148-9).

This was Buddha's sermon to the wealthy.

Go ahead with your business! You need not give up anything. It is enough if you keep your heart pure—this is what the Buddha said. This means that there is no need of the least change in the life of a businessman. He can have all his riches. Further, he can increase his riches by doing business more diligently. His masterhood will continue as before. His slaves, servants and everything—as before!

According to the path which the Buddha showed to the wealthy, kings could continue to rule their kingdoms, traders could carry on their trade. One can acquire wealth in one's own way. However, everything should take place without selfishness. Like a drop of water on the lotus! Why could not the Buddha say to that wealthy person, 'you say that you have worries due to this wealth, don't you? Then why do you have so much wealth? Why so many ventures? Is it not enough to have things that enable you to lead a simple life?' The Buddha did not say this because the wealthy

people will not like it, will they? (Ambedkar too would not like the Buddha to say so!) How could the Buddha suggest a path which the wealthy would not like? That is why he suggested a great path: well, there is nothing wrong in possessing wealth. Have you noticed a drop of water on the lotus? Remain touched and untouched by wealth! This means that one has to eat lavish food with disinclination! While riding on the horse drawn chariots, one has to ride with disinclination! While sleeping on silk-covered beds, one has to sleep with disinclination! That is how it goes on! The only principle is touch and yet remain untouched.

The Buddha's sermon impressed Anathapindika greatly. Is it not, indeed, impressive? It does. The Buddha said that it was not necessary to worship God. Anathapindika must have thought, 'God! I am saved!'

Anathapindika perceived that this was the most excellent system of truth, simple and of wisdom born (p. 149).

What wisdom! What truth!!

The Buddha gave many sermons while admitting King Pasenjit to disciplehood: 'Regard your people as we do an only son. Do not oppress them... Give comfort and befriend the sufferer... Transgress not the rules of kingly conduct. (This means, don't give up your power and privilege). After sermons of this sort, the Buddha assured him that he would acquire 'a good name for distant ages' (pp: 150-51). Impressed by this sermon, the king vowed to become his disciple (only a 'promise'! This fellow seems the cleverest of the lot!)

Why do wealthy people listen to such sermons if the sermons are not in their favour? Does any rich person listen to the sermons if the Buddha said, 'Give up your kingly life! Give up your wealth and riches! Live a life of austerity by tilling the land! Perform labour as slaves do?' Will they join as disciples of these Sanyasis? The Buddha knows that it won't happen. That is why, kings can rule their kingdoms! Traders can carry on their trade! All the masters can dominate slaves! The life of the rich persons can remain as ever!

In this manner, "Lord" Buddha, while admitting the wealthy as his disciples, gave them sermons so that their wealth remains and their feelings are not hurt.

10) The poor disciples

Upali was a barber and he came to the Buddha along with some Sakyas for admission as a disciple. The Sakyas told the Buddha:

> "We Sakyans, Lord, are haughty. And this Upali, the barber, has long been an attendant, Lord, upon us. May the Blessed One admit him to the Order before us, so that we may render him respect and reverence, and bow down with outstretched hands before him as our senior and thus shall the Sakyan pride be humbled in us!" (p. 185).

Accordingly, the Buddha admitted Upali as his disciple. Citing this situation, some Dalit intellectuals argue: 'Look what the Buddha did to make upper castes worship a low caste person! He did so to honour the low castes'. But worshipping and serving low castes by upper castes is as bad as worshipping and serving upper castes by lower castes. The desired change is not the reversal of existing hierarchical order.

When the Sakyans asked so, the Buddha should have corrected their views. 'It is not a correct principle to worship a person who is first admitted as a disciple. It is not correct if upper castes worship low castes. Give up caste consciousness and acquire a new perspective that 'all are human beings and all are equal'. As the Buddha did not correct the views of the youth, it led to a misunderstanding that 'the Buddha made upper castes worship low castes'.

None knows whether all these incidents in the Buddha's life occurred or not and if they did was it exactly as depicted here. Our comments and critique will be and should be on the basis of what and how the writers of these stories have told them.

Well, Upali became a Sanyasi. So what has happened here? He was until then doing some physical labour and living by his own effort. But hereafter he turns into a sanyasi, becomes a parasite on the public and begins to live on the labour of other people, with a sense of pride of a sanyasi thus, 'give me alms! It is your duty'. This is what happened!

Let us see Sumita's story. Even this man belonged to a low caste. He was a scavenger (road cleaner) in Rajagraha.

One day in the early hours of the dawn the Buddha walked into the streets for alms followed by a large number of Bhikkus (p. 186). The Buddha used to go for alms 'too early' (p. 318). He used to go to the Ashrams of other Sanyasis, sit there and continue to discuss Dhamma till dawn. Similarly, now also, he started for alms along with his disciples. They need 'food' after they wake up, don't they?

Shouldn't all these Sanyasis take brooms and sweep the streets? Shouldn't they do some work or other either in the fields or at the looms? How shameless are they to go for alms without doing any work?

Sunita, who was cleaning the street and collecting rubbish, looked at the group of Sanyasis with joy and awe, stood as if stuck to the wall and saluted the Buddha. 'Lord' the Buddha, "in voice divinely sweet", said, 'Sunita! Why are you leading such a wretched life? Will you leave home and join the Sangh?'

What? Is cleaning streets a wretched life? Should he stop doing it? Even if Sunita stops doing it, some other person has to do that job, doesn't he? The streets won't be clean if none sweeps, would they? Look, the person who acquired great enlightenment under a Banyan tree, is advising people not to sweep the roads!

In response to the Buddha's words, Sunita hesitatingly asked the Buddha, 'will you admit me into your Sangh?' Immediately the Buddha called Sunita 'Bhikku'! Sunita at once got a bowl and robes.

Describing how Sunita became so great because of conversion, the Buddha said,

> "As on a rubbish-heap on highway cast a lily may grow, fragrant and sweet, so among rubbish-creatures, worldliness blind by insight shines the very the Buddha's child" (p. 186).

The Buddha knew that rubbish heaps accumulate on highways. But this man of enlightenment (the Buddha) did not understand the necessity of cleaning highways. The Buddha was praising Sunita saying that he became a holy person because he gave up scavenging and joined as his disciple. This means, the person, who was until then living on his own labour became a 'fragrant and sweet lily flower' after giving up his labour and began to live on others' labour.

Won't the group of sanyasis start for alms the next day as usual along with Sunita? Then Vinita or some one will sweep the streets, won't he? The Buddha has to ask that sweeper why he was leading such a wretched life and advise him to join his Sangh. He should save one person daily from sweeping the highway, shouldn't he?

Persons with enlightenment entertain this kind of false thought because their knowledge concerning society is not the real knowledge. When a person is not aware of the fact that human society is based on labour and labour relations, performing labour appears to be a mean thing and escaping from labour appears to be a great thing. It appears so to either the Buddha or Ambedkar or any one who does not know about labour relations. While this is so, there is another question here: What did the Buddha say when wealthy merchants asked him whether they should give up their business enterprises and become homeless like him? He said, 'It is not necessary. Carry on your business diligently! It is enough if you

keep your hearts pure'. When he admitted kings into his Dhamma, he did not ask any king to join his Sangh. He told kings to rule their kingdoms. He told merchants to carry on their business. Though admitted as disciples, they were involved in activities of increasing their wealth without changing into Bhikkus. Well, then, why did the Buddha ask Sunita to join his Sangh? Why didn't he put the same question to the wealthy?

Why shouldn't Sunita become a disciple without becoming a Sanyasi and live with his family members? Who would care for his children if he became Sanyasi? Who would take care of his parents when they became old?

He didn't say such words to the wealthy because they won't heed his advice if he says 'leave your families, riches, wealth and slaves'. The propertyless paupers alone are ready for anything, aren't they? Hence, one can give any crazy sermons to them.

The Buddha admitted some more low caste people as disciples and turned them into Bhikkus. Sopaka and Suppiya were untouchables in Shravasti, Channa was a native of Kapilavastu and was a slave in the house of Suddhodana. Dhanniya was a potter in Rajagraha. And some more low caste people. All these people received sermons of the Buddha, turned into sanyasis and became holy like a fragrant and sweet lily. What were the sermons that these people received? 'Don't speak untruth, don't steal, don't take intoxicants, don't do sacrifices, don't wear ornaments and garlands'. These are the sermons. In other words, 'Follow Ashtanga Marga!' A path that makes them pure, righteous and virtuous! These are the words, which these Bhikkus too have to teach people living at different places. They have to wander saying that 'this alone is the path of human emancipation'. These Bhikkus are not like beggars who stand in front of the houses of people and beg. Their status is very high. The householders invite them to their houses and serve them meals with varied delicious and lavish dishes until the guests say, 'it is enough! It is enough!' They arrange feasts by extending invitation in advance: 'Please come to our home tomorrow'. These Bhikkus directly go there, say a few words in the name of 'sermon', then enjoy the feast and leave the place. Next day, at another house! All the householders are of the type who think, 'it is enough if a sanyasi visits us. Our home will become a holy place!'

11) Nothing is our own, except slaves!

When 'Lord' Buddha was touring Kuru country preaching his doctrine, a young man named Ratthapala heard the Buddha's sermons and converted into a Bhikku. He was a very rich man. He had slaves to serve him at home. He had 'wives'. Some days after conversion, he requested

the Buddha to permit him to go to his home and see his parents. The Buddha suspected that he might not return.

> "Scanning with his own heart the thoughts of Ratthapala's heart, and recognizing thereby that he was incapable of abandoning his training and reverting to the lower life of a layman, the Lord bade him go when he would" (p. 155).

This means, the Buddha permitted Ratthapala to visit his parents only after he was convinced that there was no risk of Ratthapala's staying back and that he would definitely return! He would return if he liked. Otherwise he wouldn't return. Should a person not have the freedom to cease to be a Sanyasi if he feels so? The Buddha should tell him, 'Go happily to your home! Come back if you feel like coming back! There is no compulsion'; should he not tell him so? The Buddha himself told Anathapindika earlier, 'Tathagatha's doctrine does not compel any one'; didn't he? Now what is this? He wouldn't have allowed him to leave if he suspected that this young man wouldn't return!

What sort of stories are these, Mr. Ambedkar? Sir, have you determined to defame the Buddha?

Well, Ratthapala went to his home, ate the 'excellent meal' and relaxed in the deer-park. The Kuru King came there to see this Bhikku. The Bhikku gave the following sermons of Dhamma:

> "The world is in continual flux and change. The world has no protector or preserver. We own nothing; we must leave everything behind. The world lacks and hankers, being enslaved to craving" (pp: 159-60).

To this sermon, the Kuru King responded, "It is wonderful! It is marvellous!"

That's all! Everything is as before! The king remains a king. The slaves in the house of Bhikku (Ratthapala) remain slaves! "We own nothing", this sermon of the Bhikku remains sermon! All the rich people own their respective properties! The king owns his kingdom! The wealthy person owns slaves! All the masters own lands! The Bhikkus own sermons, propaganda and feasts! This is what the sermon, 'we own nothing' means!

12) Aha! How comfortable this renunciation is!

Anuruddha and Mahanama were brothers in Kapilavastu. Mahanama asked Anuruddha one day, "will you join the retinue of the Buddha or shall I join".

Anuruddha replied, "I can't lead such a homeless life my dear brother! You do so".

Then Mahanama began to explain how difficult the household life was compared to homeless life:

> "Anuruddha, listen! Let me tell you how householder's life looks like! First you have to get your fields ploughed. You have to get the seeds pulled up. You have to get the crop arranged into bundles. You have to get it trodden out. You have to get the straw picked out, the chaff removed and winnowed. You have to get the harvest garnered. When that is done, you have to do just the same the next year, and the same all over again the year after that" (pp: 168-69).

Hearing all this Anuruddha said, "Then you do household duties! I will join the Buddha's retinue". Then he became a sanyasi.

This means, the life of a sanyasi is easier than that of a householder! He can eat well and roam around without any work!

It was Ambedkar's hope to enhance the reputation of the Buddha!

13) 'Signs' of a 'Great Being' in the Buddha

When the Buddha was a child, a rishi announced that there were 32 signs of a great person on the body of the Buddha. Mr. Ambedkar is now going to show what those features are. Once the Buddha along with 500 Bhikkus, was touring Kosala country for the propagation of his Dhamma and stayed in the village 'Ikkhahanankala'. Pokkharsadi, a Brahmin in that village asked his pupil Ambattha: Ambattha, people of all countries say that Goutama had acquired great knowledge and virtue. Go and find out whether it is true or false! Go and observe the Buddha's body whether it has 32 signs that are found on the body of a great man. The teacher and the pupil have a lot of Vedic knowledge by which they can recognize signs on the body of a great person (Vol. 3, p.205).

Ambattha went to the Buddha on 'a chariot drawn by mares'. The Buddha told Ambattha how ancient Vedic rishis led a principled life of austerity. 'You and your teacher parade about well groomed, perfumed, trimmed as to your hair and beard adorned with garlands and gems, clad in white garments, in the full possession and enjoyment of the five pleasures of the senses. You are eating boiled rice and various curries and sauces. You are going about driving chariots drawn by mares'. Thus the Buddha criticised their luxurious life.

Conversation took place between the Buddha and Ambattha for some time. Ambattha was looking for signs of a great person on the body of the Buddha.

"...he (Ambattha) took stock of the thirty-two signs of a great man, whether they appeared on the body of the Blessed One or not. And he perceived them all save only two" (Vol. 3, p. 217).

There are no details as to what those 30 signs are which Ambattha noticed. The 2 signs which he could not see are: "the concealed member and the extent of tongue" (p. 217). Ambattha could not see whether the Buddha had these two things in the same proportion as the great men have.

"...the Blessed One knew that he was so in doubt. And he so arranged matters by his Wondrous Gift that Ambattha the Brahman saw how that part of the Blessed One that ought to be hidden by clothes was enclosed in a sheath. And the Blessed One so bent round his tongue that he touched and stroked both his ears, touched and stroked both his nostrils, and the whole circumstance of his forehead he covered with his tongue" (Vol.3, p. 217).

Touching ears with tongue? Covering forehead with tongue? Is the Buddha a human being or an animal-like being or an animal like a wolf. As per this description, all men in the world are merely dwarves—including Ambedkar!

Satisfied with the proof, Ambattha returned in the chariot.

The teacher did not believe his pupil's words. He wanted to see for himself and proceeded to the Buddha. He had "sweet food, both hard and soft, made ready at his own house, and taken on wagons".

"...the Brahman Pokkharasadi took stock, on the body of the Blessed One, of the thirty two marks of a Great Being. And he saw them all plainly, save only two. As to two of them the sheat concealed member and the extensive tongue he was still in doubt and undecided. But the Blessed One showed them to Pokkharasadi, even as he had shown them to Ambattha" (Vol. 3, p. 219).

That Brahman perceived that the Buddha's body had not only some signs but all the signs. Having perceived this, he was impressed by the Buddha and became his disciple. The Brahman Pokkarasadi said:

"With my sons, and my wife, and my people, and my companies, betake myself to the venerable Gotama as my guide" (Vol. 3, p. 220).

But why should his wife believe what he said about the greatness of the Buddha? This gentleman too did not believe the matter when his pupil Ambattha reported, did he? He came here to see every thing with his own eyes, didn't he? Shouldn't his wife too see those wonders with her own eyes?

In this manner, Ambedkar narrated through two great Brahmans the miracle of the Buddha's hidden parts of the body and proved that the Buddha is indeed a great being!

The sooner the better the human kind realizes that its comfort and peace are hidden in the measurements of the hidden parts of its body!

14) Why should a leprosy patient live?

Once the Buddha was staying near Rajagraha in a bamboo grove. A leper by name Supprabuddha came there to listen to the Buddha's sermon. Looking at the whole gathering, the Buddha thought that Supprabuddha alone could grasp the truth. According to the story, the specialty of Supprabuddha is that he was a leper. Other than this feature, there was no difference between him and the others. Why did the Buddha think that Supprabuddha alone could grasp the truth? Does one have to suffer from leprosy in order to grasp the truth? This stupid story is meant to tell us, 'look how affectionate the Buddha was toward a leper'! Thereafter, the Buddha gave a special sermon to this leper.

> "He pointed out the meanness and vileness of sensual desires and the profit of freedom from the asavas" (p. 189).

The story does not say that this leper acquired this disease because of 'sensual desires'. Then why did the Buddha specifically point out the 'meanness and vileness of sensual desires'? This means that the Buddha, as soon as he saw the leper, thought that the leper must have acquired this disease due to sensual pleasures. That is why, he gave him a special kind of sermon.

That stupid leper, without grasping that the sermon was an insult to him, praised the Buddha a lot and begged him to accept him as 'His follower'. After conversion, Supprabuddha saluted the Buddha and went away. While he was on his way, 'a young calf flung the leper Supprabuddha down and gored him to death" (p. 190). What does the ending of this story mean? Does it mean, 'why should a leper live?'

15) Does the Buddha do magic?

Angulimala was a big bandit. He was a very cruel 'ruffian'. He used to rob people, kill them and

> "from every human being whom he slew, he took a finger to make for himself a necklace" (p. 204).

The Buddha heard of this cruel creature, decided to 'convert' him into a righteous man and proceeded alone toward the forest. Many people

who met the Buddha on his way warned him not to go that side. Yet the Buddha did not stop his attempt.

Angulimala was astonished to see the Buddha coming from a distance. He wanted to kill that sanyasi (the Buddha). But "the robber, for all his efforts, could not catch him up". Then the robber surprised, 'This is wonderful! I could always overtake an elephant, or a horse, or a carriage, or a deer, when going out full speed. Today I am unable to overtake this Bhikku.' He shouted to the Buddha to stop. Angulimala threw away the string of his victim's fingers, which he had worn round his neck and followed the Buddha. This is the story! How did the Buddha convert a robber into a righteous person? With a miracle! The entire book of Ambedkar is full of miracles! Full of supernatural powers!

What should disciples say when they read such stories as these about the Buddha? They should say, 'the Buddha is a rationalist. What are all these stories, full of supernatural powers? We should not believe such stories as these wherever they appear'. They have to present the Buddha's life history with caution. But Ambedkar did not do so anywhere. He collected all false stories in vogue on the Buddha and put them uncritically before readers as if they were true incidents. Ambedkar did not hesitate to write all these scrap stories promising to tell the story of a rationalist.

16) Feast after feast! Gift after gift!

Wealthy disciples began to compete among themselves to present 'gifts' to the Buddha, however, in the name of donation to Buddhist monks! (pp: 473-82).

Once King Bimbisara invited the Buddha to his palace for a 'meal' (feast). He ordered excellent food to be prepared. He arranged special seats for the Buddha and other monks. He sat near the Buddha and thought of a place for the Buddha to live in. He decided to give away his pleasure garden, Veluvana, that is away from the crowd, where there is little sound and little noise by night. He made the gift of the pleasure garden to the Buddha by pouring water over the Buddha's hand from a golden vessel.

Anathapindika too wanted to offer a gift to the Buddha. When he expressed his desire to found a vihar for the Buddha, the Buddha showed his willingness to accept the gift. While searching for a place, Anathapindika saw the garden of the prince of Shravasti with its 'green groves and limpid rivulets' and thought that it was the right place for the Buddha. He began to bargain for it. The prince demanded money enough to cover the garden with gold coins. Anathapindika agreed to pay it. (This means that the fellow who uplifts the poor as so much money!)

Anathapindika began to spread gold, the prince created trouble and refused to sell the garden. The dispute went to the magistrate. All people came to know about the dispute. (It did not bother the Buddha despite so much dispute about the place which he was going to get as a gift!). Then the prince came to know that Anathapindika was buying the place for the sake of the Buddha. The prince felt happy and agreed to sell it for half the price. Now the place is available. They began to build a Vihar in it.

> "Having made the foundation, they began to build the hall which rose loftily in due proportions according to the directions which the Blessed One had given; and it was beautifully decorated with appropriate carvings" (p. 475).

See what sort of welcome the Buddha received when he entered the vihar called 'Jeetavana'.

> "Anathapindika scattered flowers and burned incense, and as a sign of the gift he poured water from a golden dragon pitcher, saying, "This Jetavana Vihara I give for the use of the brotherhood throughout the world" (p. 475).

Receiving this gift, the Buddha said, 'May this gift be a blessing to mankind in general and especially to the giver!' Especially to the 'giver'! That is 'fame' for the giver! 'Property' to the receiver! What does humankind get from this? Muck!

Why these gifts at all for monks? It is said that they have to collect 'alms' in the village and live on alms. One of the rules which monks are expected to observe is 'don't take gifts'. Are simple hermitages not enough for the monks to live in? Do they need viharas in pleasure gardens with beautifully decorated and artistic carvings? Does living in viharas not mean enjoying comforts? Whose property is that entire property? Who are the people that enjoy those luxuries?

The Buddha, who advises not to wear wreaths, walks on the flowers! The person who says 'no luxuries' wanders amidst burnt incense and gold and silver! The person who advises to eat limited food always enjoys feasts.

Do the writers and supporters of these stories have any morality?

Jeevika, the royal physician wanted to give a big gift to the Buddha. He expressed his wish to the Buddha that he wanted to build a Vihara in Ambavana and gift it to him.

> "The Blessed Lord (the Buddha) showed his acceptance by remaining silent" (p. 476).

Amrapali was a courtesan in Vesali. She invited the Buddha to come to her house for a feast along with her monks. The Buddha visited her place along with his group of followers.

Amrapali served sweet rice and cakes to the Buddha and other monks till they were sated. When Amrapali said that she would like to gift her 'pleasance' (pleasure garden) to the Buddha and his Sangh, 'the Exalted One (the Buddha) accepted the gift'. One palace at each place! One pleasure garden at each place! They said that Bhikkus (monks) should not own properties, didn't they?

"Vishakha was a wealthy woman of Shravasti".

Those who do not know how 'wealth' is accumulated will not have repulsion to the 'wealthy'. They describe 'wealth' as a great virtue. Ambedkar does not at all simmer with anger to describe and praise the rich people as 'noble families' and 'wealthy'.

Vishakha was a 'wealthy woman'. Not only that but also a 'munificent' woman! One day she invited the Buddha 'to take his meal at her house'. After the meal she requested the Buddha to give her eight boons! Any one would normally ask for only one boon not eight boons at a time.

So this shrewdness is the secret of her wealth! She might have amassed her entire wealth in this manner.

"The Tathagatas grant no boons unless they know what they are" (p.479).

This gentleman calls himself 'Lord' and 'Tathagata'. He has this crazy habit! Let it be crazy, he said a good thing, 'I don't give those boons without knowing what they are'. He was very frank without hesitating thus, "Just now, I have taken my meal at this home. How can I say no?

The boons that she asked were that the Buddha should allow her to provide monks with eight comforts, namely, constant supply of rice milk, robes and so on. What does the Buddha, who lives on 'alms' need more? He accepted the gift and praised her a lot: 'Your gift is heavenly, destructive of sorrow, and productive of bliss' (p. 482). Overwhelmed by the praises, Vishakha also donated the "Purva-Aram or Eastern Garden". How many gardens did she have in various directions? Who knows?

Owing to these donations, the monks will constantly get delicious meals, clothing, medicines and pleasant places of residence! Without doing any labour! The entire labour will be that of slaves who work for these donors in their fields and business. The labour of the slaves first goes to

the masters and from there it reaches the recipients of the donations. This means, all these donors and recipients live on the exploitation of slaves.

A pleasant narration about a feast:

"Lohikka the Brahmin served the Order, with the Buddha at its head, with his own hand, with sweet food both hard and soft, until they refused any more" (p. 288).

"And the Exalted One went on to the dwelling-place of Lohikka the Brahman, and sat down on the seat prepared for him. And Lohikka the Brahman satisfied the Order, with the Buddha at its head with his own hand, with sweet food both hard and soft, until they refused any more!" (Vol. 3, pp: 223-24).

Thus the Buddha's Sangh had feast after feast Gift after gift!

"Anathapindika was one of the eighty chief disciples who bore the title of Chief Almsgiver" (p. 476).

According to these stories the Buddha's Sangh too carried the activity of accumulating properties!

17) Quarrels among monasteries for properties

All the monasteries keep earning gold, silver, land and cash in the name of gift. The heads of different monasteries or sects keep fighting for the control over these properties. Owing to these properties, the bands of sanyasis (monks) pass time, without work of any sort in eating, drinking, debauchery and addictions of various sorts.

Antagonism, quarrels and fights for the sake of properties between different monasteries or sects of monks keep going on. Ultimately murders too take place! The Buddha's Sangh was not an exception to this.

Envious of the properties which the Buddha's Sangh was earning, other monasteries became antagonistic toward the Buddha's Sangh. People stopped giving gifts to sanyasis called Tirthikas.

"Standing on the public streets they used to harangue: If Samana Gautama is enlightened (the Buddha), we are also. If you acquire virtue by showering presents on the Buddha, you will get the same by giving us presents. Therefore make gift to us" (p. 490).

These Tirthikas, in order to discourage people from giving gifts to the Buddha's Sangh, planned to defame the Buddha. They hired some assassins, got a prostitute killed and conducted a false propaganda that it

was the Buddha who had got her killed. Some more incidents of this kind occurred. Though all this false propaganda was not exclusively due to properties, the main reason was property. The situation would have been different if the Buddha's Sangh had lived a life of austerity in ordinary huts without accepting land, mansions and pleasure gardens.

On one occasion the Buddha said to his follower not to long for gains or favours. Do you know when? When he came to know that Devadatta, who had turned hostile to him was receiving gains and favours from prince Ajatasatru!

> "...so long as Prince Ajatasatru thus supports Devadatta it is ruin that may be expected of Devadatta, and not growth in good conditions. Thus terrible, brethern, are gains, favours, and flattery of the princes" (p. 405).

But the same the Buddha, who utters all these morals, accepted many properties in the name of gifts from kings and the wealthy: at least from 80 persons!

The Buddha's enemies murdered Mogallana, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha.

> "Mahamogallan was then living in a solitary Vihar near Rajagraha. He was murdered by some assassins employed by the enemies of the Blessed Lord... Sariputta and Mahamogallan were his two chief disciples" (p.538).

Antagonism for share in the properties arise inevitably where people do not do any physical labour but lead a luxurious and leisurely life by earning properties in wrong ways. This became inevitable even in the Buddha's Sangh.

18) Criticism against the Buddha

There were some points of criticism against the Buddha's doctrine during and after his life-time. Important among them are that the Buddha is a parasite living on others, that the Buddha's Ahimsa (non-violence) involves non-resistance to evil and that the Buddha's doctrine is 'barren metaphysics'. And there are some more points of this kind.

Citing this criticism, Ambedkar argues that critics make these charges since they have not understood the Buddha's Dhamma properly. He gave some illustrations how to understand the Buddha Dhamma.

(1) Is the Buddha a parasite?

According to Ambedkar, the Buddha gave a very good reply to this charge. This means, this charge had been there since the Buddha's time. Ambedkar narrated a story to illustrate the Buddha's reply (pp: 486-88).

When a Brahmin by name Kasi-Bharadvaja was doing work in his field at the village of Eka-Nala near Magadha, the Buddha went to the Brahmin for alms. Observing the Buddha, the Brahmin said: "Before I eat I plough and sow. You too should plough and sow before you eat". In response, the Buddha said, 'I too plough and sow before I eat". He explained the nature of his cultivation:

> "My seed is faith; austerity of life my rain; wisdom my yoke and plough; my pole is fear to err; plough share and the goad... Watchful o'er word and deed, and temperate in diet, I make in sight weed my crop, nor rest till final bliss is harvested. Effort is my stout ox, which turns me on, to that last borne where anguish is no more. Thus, I till with Deathlessness for crop. And who tills as I, is freed from ills" (p. 487).

Thus the Buddha claimed that he was raising a more valuable crop than the farmer working in the field.

We will see later how the farmer responded to this. But what should have been his reply? "Is that so? Are you also tilling the land like me? Are you harvesting the final bliss? Well, then, why have you come to me for your food? Won't your hunger be satisfied with the harvest of final bliss? I haven't come to you for food, have I? Can't you satisfy your hunger with your harvest? If you need my crop to satisfy your hunger, then what is the use of your crop? A person like you, who harvested such a great crop, had to come to a farmer like me for alms! Will you exist to harvest such a great crop if some one does not give you alms? Have you understood that it is my crop, which is necessary for humans to survive? What sort of a knowledgeable person are you if you don't understand such a mundane issue?"

But that innocent farmer did not say so. He put a blank face in response to the Buddha's proud description of 'harvesting the final bliss'. Immediately, he offered milk-rice in a great bronze dish and praised the Buddha: 'You are a tiller indeed'. Bowing his head at the Buddha's feet, he cried: 'Your doctrine is wonderful! Accept me as your disciple!' Then the 'lord' admitted Kasi-Bharadvaja as an almsman.

There is a saying in Telugu: 'A baying donkey disturbed the grazing donkey'. The farmer, who was dutifully cultivating the land stopped doing work and became a lazy fellow without doing any work. Hereafter, this new monk too will become a parasite on another farmer and maintain himself for the day by uttering few useless words like: 'My plough, my people, my harvest of final bliss!' Just as farmer was fascinated by the Buddha's reply of harvesting the final bliss, Ambedkar too was fascinated. He narrated this story as if the Buddha gave a fitting reply to the charge of being a parasite.

Just as the farmer did not raise the question—as to why the Buddha, who harvested the final bliss, came with a bowl to the farmer's crop in the field—Ambedkar too did not raise the question.

Let us think about the matter. Can't we assume that the Buddha is doing service to the society by teaching his doctrine and hence society has the responsibility of maintaining him? A teacher teaches students and receives some remuneration from them, doesn't he? Similarly, why cant' we think that the Buddha is preaching his doctrine and receiving alms in return?

No, we can't think like that. It is because it cannot be 'service to society' if a person takes remuneration for the work done. Do we call it 'service to society' if the teacher teaches students and takes remuneration in return to a work Then it amounts to selling that work. It becomes 'service to society' only if it is done free. A person who does 'service to society' has to do it while doing some job for his maintenance. That person has to plan his time in such a way that he can do two kinds of jobs. This is how it is possible: if a person is simple in his personal needs and does not indulge in passing of time unnecessarily, then the time required for self-maintenance will decrease and he finds some time to do service to society. If he does so, it amounts to service to society. Whatever the Buddha does cannot be considered if he takes alms in return for the preaching of his doctrine.

Well, let us think that it is not service to society. Let us not call it so. Let us say that he is receiving alms from the people and giving his wisdom in return. This means, he is not taking alms free. Then how can he be a parasite? Can't we think like this?

But this interpretation too is not wholly appropriate. True that the Buddha is preaching doctrine of wisdom to the people. But what he receives from them in return is not something required for a simple maintenance. It exceeds it many times. He receives daily feasts, many mansions, many pleasure gardens and many properties. Further, the Buddha is not a teacher in the view of people. He occupied the place of a 'Lord'. If he were a teacher no one would eulogize him with such address forms as: Blessed Lord, Blessed One, Exalted One, Tathagata and so on. All these eulogies and daily salutations to the feet are the free gifts which devotees present to a religious teacher and not remuneration which students offer to an ordinary teacher. Therefore we cannot argue that the Buddha took alms only in return to what he gave the people. When a person gives less and takes more he inevitably becomes a parasite.

Any sanyasi (monk) is a parasite. The same applies to the Buddha as well: however great his doctrine may be! It (the greatness of his doctrine) is a different matter!

Whether it is in the past or the present, it is the labouring people who have been maintaining all these bands of monks as a whole. It does not mean that monks have been living on their own labour.

(2) On the Buddha's 'Ahimsa' (Non-Violence)

A criticism against the Buddha's doctrine is that it involves non-resistance to evil. Concerning this criticism, Ambedkar says,

> "This is a complete misrepresentation of what the Blessed Lord taught by his doctrine of Ahimsa" (p. 507).
>
> "He taught that evil should be cured by the return of good. But he never preached that evil should be allowed to overpower good" (p.509).

To prove this, Ambedkar cited an example. At one time there was an agitation in Magadha kingdom. The king Bimbisara ordered his commander to capture the offenders and kill them. (This king is considered to be a great follower of the Buddha). The commander gave the same orders to his subordinate officers. Those subordinate officers found themselves in a dilemma. They were believers of the Buddha's doctrine of Ahimsa. They knew that the Buddha would advise not to wage wars. They did not want to impose death sentence on the offenders. They were prepared to leave their jobs. They became Bhikkus (monks) in Sangh. The Buddha knew all this.

The king came to know about it and discussed with his officers of justice. They advised him to behead those who converted them into Bhikkus. The king went to the Buddha and reported the incident as if it had happened elsewhere. He told the Buddha that there are some kings who would harass the Bhikkus for encouraging the soldiers to leave the army and join the Sangh and sought his intervention.

Do you want to know how the Buddha responded?

> "It was never my intention to allow soldiers under the cloak of Ahimsa or in the name of Ahimsa to abandon their duty to the king or to their country" (p. 508).

Moreover, he made a rule against the admission of persons in royal service. He declared that the king should not confer the Pabbajja ordination on any person in the army and

> "He who confers the Pabbajja ordination on such a person will be guilty of a dukkata offence" (p.508).

This is the story! Ambedkar, by citing this story, argues along the following lines. 'Where did the Buddha say not to resist evil? He said to suppress agitation that flares up in the kingdom, didn't he? Does this mean he suggested resisting evil.

How surprising is this? According to this story, Bimbisara is a big thief! He speaks blatant lies even while talking to the Buddha. He does not attach any value to the Buddha's doctrine.

In this story, commanders are very noble persons. They had really believed the Buddha's doctrine. They decided not to participate in wars even if they lose their jobs and hence they gave up their profession. Every person should have freedom to change his occupation. They did accordingly.

According to this story, the Buddha is an outright hypocrite. He is a stooge of kings. He speaks one thing and does another. According to him, soldiers must follow orders of the kings. They are obliged to participate in wars. They have to kill all those who revolt against the king. Soldiers should not have the freedom to oppose the orders of the kings. What should the Buddha say when Bimbisara cunningly reported the matter? Knowing all the details, he should say 'your military officers have acted wonderfully!' He should also say, 'It is their wish not to participate in wars, if they don't like. They have the right to decide how to lead their lives. If you want people who fight wars for you, search for those who are willing to do so! If no one is ready, let all kings stop wars! This is what I want to say'. But the Buddha did not say so. Moreover he said that soldiers should not leave their profession, that they are obliged to participate in wars, that they should kill people and thus secure kingdoms for their kings! How odd this is!

Has Ambedkar narrated this story with the confidence that the Buddha's reputation would still stand even after this story?

We may save the Buddha to some extent if we offer an explanation that 'some fools might have composed this story. How is the Buddha responsible?' But if we want to set these stories aside and see the real Buddha, in which book will we find that real the Buddha? All these stories are narrated by his devotees, aren't they?

Let us keep the Buddha aside. We are actually concerned with Ambedkar. Isn't Ambedkar courageous to depict the Buddha saying at one place, 'war is not a solution for anything. People should not fight wars' and in another place, 'soldiers should fight wars if the kings order so'!

What has Ambedkar—who argued many a time in other contexts that every individual should have the freedom to choose occupation of his

choice—done here? He narrated the denial of freedom to those who decided to give up the profession of a soldier as some thing great and the Buddha performed that great deed! What should we call such a narration?

19) Ahimsa in the case of 'food'

What is the nature of the Buddha's concept of 'Ahimsa' in the case of 'food'? Can we kill animals for the sake of food?

> "Kill, nor cause slaughter" (p. 358). "Slay not, nor doom to death, nor sanction slaughter. Do no violence to aught that lives¾strong or weak" (p. 392).

Sermons of this sort are plentiful in the Buddha's doctrine. We will find them every where in his preaching. This is the specialty, which is not there in the Vedic religion. It is the specialty of the Buddha that he says that human beings should not only think of their own well-being but also think kindly about all other living beings in Nature.

When some one reads this preaching, can any one imagine that the Buddha intended these qualities of compassion and Ahimsa not to apply to matters of food?

According to the Buddha, all monks can eat fish, meat (flesh of animal) and every thing! In fact all monks including the Buddha ate everything!

Feasts of animal food used to be arranged for monks.

> "In the time of the Buddha there was in Vaisali a wealthy general named Siha who was a convert to Buddhism. He became a liberal supporter of the Brethern and kept them constantly supplied with good flesh-food... a breakfast given by Siha to the Buddha and some of the Brethren, for which the carcass of a large ox was procured..." (Vol. 7, p. 347).

The sanyasi called Tirthikas began to ridicule and abuse Buddhist monks with reference to eating fish and meat. Then the Buddha formulated certain principles regarding the use of meat in his Sangh. He specified that there is nothing wrong in eating meat in 5 kinds of situations. They are: 1) Bhikshu should not watch the animal put to death. 2) He should not hear about it. 3) He should not have even a suspicion that the animal was killed for his sake. 4) The animal should have died a natural death. 5) When the animal was killed by a bird of prey or other savage creature. There is nothing wrong in eating fish and meat in these kinds of situation. (Vol. 7, p. 347). This is the Buddha's concept of Ahimsa in the case of food. Of these five reasons, the natural death of the animal and its death by savage creature are unconnected with the Bhikshu. All the other reasons

are wholly hypocritical. Even if they themselves do not kill the animal, or do not watch while it is killed or do not hear about its killing or even if it was not killed specifically for their sake, all the meat eaters are responsible for that violence. It means, not only those who kill the animal but also all those who eat that meat committed that violence.

Many rich persons invite Bhikshus for meals. They get dishes of meat prepared for the Bhikshus because they eat such food. But while serving that food, the rich hosts would say, 'we have not got these dishes prepared for you! We are serving you whatever we had prepared for us'. This explanation is enough for Bhikshus. They eat those dishes of meat happily thinking, 'we have no connection with this violence. We are the incarnation of non-violence'. How hypocritical this is!

Another argument of Bhikshus in defense of their eating meat is: 'when we go for alms, we should accept whatever alms givers offer, shouldn't we? We have to accept even if they give meat'. Will they accept toddy liquor if the alms-givers offer just as they offer milk? No, they won't. As there is a rule prohibiting consumption of intoxicants, they refuse it on that ground: 'We don't want toddy. We should not drink toddy. Give us gruel. It is enough!', they say. They can say the same thing when their hosts offer them meat: 'we don't want meat. Give us morsels of pickle'. If they ask like this, the hosts won't say, 'no, we will offer only meat. Eat only meat!' It is bad if the alms takers ask for expensive foodstuffs and it is not bad if they refuse expensive food. Therefore, the argument that 'one has to accept whatever alms givers offer' is nothing but a hypocritical motive to eat meat.

'If you have not witnessed the killing of the animal or if you have not killed it, you have nothing to do with that violence even if you ate meat'—this kind of argument impressed Ambedkar a lot. Ambedkar defended shamelessly this hypocritical argument describing Ahimsa as a very great doctrine and that the Buddha had wisely formulated certain rules.

Ambedkar's explanation concerning the proper interpretation of the Buddha's doctrine of Ahimsa is as follows:

> "The Buddha has nowhere given any definition of Ahimsa....One has, therefore to spell out his intention from circumstantial evidence. The first circumstantial evidence on the point is that the Buddha had no objection to eating meat if it was offered to him as part of his alms. The monk can eat meat offered to him provided he was not a party to the killing of it. He resisted the opposition of Devadatta who insisted that the monks should be prohibited from eating meat given to them by way of alms. The next piece of evidence on the point is that he was only opposed to the killing of animals in Yajna (sacrifice). This he has himself said.

> Ahimsa Permo Dharma is an extreme Doctrine. It is a Jain Doctrine. It is not a Buddhist Doctrine. There is another piece of evidence, which is more direct than circumstantial which almost amounts to a definition of Ahimsa. He has said: "Love all so that you may not wish to kill any." This is a positive way of stating the principle of Ahimsa. From this it appears that the doctrine of Ahimsa does not say "Kill not. It says love all.... It is quite clear that the Buddha meant to make a distinction between will to kill and need to kill. He did not ban killing where there was need to kill. What he blamed was killing where there was nothing but the will to kill. So understood there is no confusion in the Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa" (p. 346).

What does 'will to kill' mean? If we consider 'hunting', though it originally began for the sake of food, it gradually turned into killing for joy. Similarly there is another practice of killing in order to watch the animals while suffering. Cock-fights, sheep fights, bull fights, wrestling of humans—all are of the same type. All these are cruel acts. All these are killings for the sake of mean entertainment.

Suppose we interpret the problem thus: 'killings as these amount to violence but killing for food is not violence and there is nothing wrong in the violence committed for the sake of 'food'. Is this interpretation right? It is immaterial for animals whether human beings are killing them for the sake of food or for any other reason. Whatever be the reason, it causes pain to the animal. Pain to animals is inevitable even when people kill animals for a non-violent reason. We have to examine the question of 'Himsa' (violence) and 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) from the view point of animals and not of human beings. It is nothing but violence if it causes pain to the animal. It is not violence if it does not cause pain. Therefore, it amounts to violence even when people kill for the sake of food. It is a different matter if people can kill an animal without causing anxiety and fear of death to the animal. Hence the interpretation that 'it is not violence if people kill for the sake of food' is wrong. If it is essential, they have to accept it as 'violence'.

The formulation—that eating meat is not violence if you are not one of the killers and if you get meat as part of your alms—is nothing but hypocrisy. Such is the explanation of Ambedkar. It is not necessary to talk more about such wrangling.

There are many more kinds of criticism. Ambedkar himself says that there is no unanimity even among Buddhists on certain issues (p. 511). They act as they like in respect of Ahimsa or about some other issues. Some Buddhists do not eat fish or meat. They eat only eggs. Some Buddhists eat every thing. They practise non-violence according to their own understanding.

It is the same case with all issues. Not only about 'food'. Burmese Buddhists interpret differently the formulation that life is short.

> "The Burmese celebrate the event of death in a family as though it was an event of joy" (p. 511).

Ambedkar too endorses this view:

> "Nobody minds the death for it was to come" (p. 511).

He meant that people need not feel sorry because death is natural. Let us accept that people need not feel sorry but why should they feel happy? Let them neither feel sorry nor feel happy. Instead of the two, people can treat it as some thing that occurs normally, can't they? Ambedkar too should make a critical observation on Burmese Buddhists, shouldn't he? But what did Ambedkar do? Instead of criticising them or to use a Telugu idiom, instead of 'giving them grass to eat', he defended their interpretation as a great one.

20) 'Barren Metaphysics' of the Buddha

While mentioning different views on Buddhism, Ambedkar says:

> "To some it is a system of barren metaphysics. To some it is sheer mysticism... Many other views regarding Buddhism can be collected. This divergence of views is astonishing" (p. 225).

He, however, concludes that the reason for so many interpretations is the inability to understand Buddhism properly. He thinks that he has understood Buddhism well and others are not able to do so.

We can decide whether Buddhism is 'barren metaphysics' or not by examining the Buddha's preaching concerning sorrow and desires. For this, the story of a girl named 'Prakriti' will help us a lot (p. 196). Prakriti belonged to an untouchable caste. She saw a Buddhist monk named Ananda and wanted to marry him. She told her mother about her wish and asked her to convince him. Prakriti's mother knew 'sorcery'. One day she invited Ananda to her house for a meal, told him about her daughter and said, 'my daughter will commit suicide if you don't marry her'.

Ananda calmly said, 'I can't help. I am a sanyasi. I am vowed to be celibate'.

The mother and the daughter prevented him from leaving the room and the mother with her sorcery created fire and threatened to throw him into the fire.

Ananda did not yield. Mother and the daughter let him leave. But, later, the girl was following Ananda wherever he went. (This means that

not only male rowdies but also female rowdies have been there since that period!)

Ananda narrated the entire episode to the Buddha. The Buddha called the girl and asked her about it. She expressed her wish to marry him. What should the Buddha have then said? 'Why are you pestering a person who does not love you? Is it not coercion?'—shouldn't the Buddha say so? But the Buddha did not say so. He said:

> "Ananda is a Bhikku and he has no hair on his head. If you can get yourself clean shaven I shall see what could be done" (p. 198).

How surprising! He uttered misleading words and created a hope that her marriage with Ananda could take place.

The Buddha tries to convert poor and low caste people into Bhikshus. We find this in many stories which Ambedkar cited.

The girl went to her mother and told her: 'Lord the Buddha has promised me to get me married to Ananda if I get myself clean shaven'. At once she got herself clean shaven, stood before the Buddha and told him, 'I did as you suggested'.

The Buddha asked her, 'what part of his (Ananda's) body you cherish?' (Have you ever heard a vulgar question such as this before?) She said she liked his eyes, nose, ears, voice and everything. The Buddha began his sermon:

> "Do you know that the eyes are the home of tears, the nose is the home of dirt, the mouth is the home of spit, the ear is the home of dirt and the body is the container of dung and urine" (p. 199).

What should that girl then say to him? She should have said, 'it is the same case with my body also, isn't it? Both our bodies suit each other, don't they?' But she didn't say that. She began to ponder! This girl, in fact, didn't have brain originally. She did not have goodness either. How can a person be fair to others when she herself chased and tried to subjugate with coercion, some one who didn't like her? How can such a person question the Buddha? But what would have happened to the Buddha's argument if that girl had asked thus: 'is it not the same case with every person's body? Isn't the Buddha's body a 'container of dung and urine'? Aren't people not bowing down and saluting the feet believing that his body has great light and aura? What if Ananda's body is a container of dirt? (It is always surprising to note that Ambedkar does not raise at least this kind of question).

According to this story, the Buddha is such a stupid fellow without

common sense that bodily structure is a natural property. His disciples too are of the same type.

The Buddha's sermon is not yet over. He further says to the girl:

> "When men and women come together they procreate children. But where there is birth there is death also; where there is death there is sorrow also. My dear girl, what are you going to get by marrying Ananda. I do not know" (p.199).

This is another crude argument!

If there is sorrow where there is death, can't there be happiness where there is birth? Don't parents feel happy when they beget children? If we consider the law of nature that death comes only in the old age, parents won't see at all the stage in which their children become old and die. This means parents feel happy not sorrow when they beget children. But the Buddha is saying that it is useless if men and women come together and the procreation of children is a matter of sorrow. A while ago he depicted human body as a container of dirt and urine: that nose is the home of dirt, the ear is the home of dirt and so on.

Mr. Ambedkar, what else people call this except 'barren metaphysics'? Well, do suggest any other reasonable term other than 'barren metaphysics'!

When the present day Ambedkar himself is fascinated or, to use a Telugu idiom, faint with admiration, by this metaphysics, should we consider the feeling of this stupid girl? After listening to the Buddha, the girl realized that there was no use in marrying Ananda. She saluted the Buddha and said,

> "Owing to ignorance I was going in pursuit of Ananda. My mind is now enlightened....The Blessed Lord by his wise words of advice has awakened me from my sleep" (p. 199).

Then the Buddha praised her a lot:

> "You are of low caste, but Brahmins will learn a lesson from you".

What does 'from you' mean? From her body, 'the container of dung and urine'? Or from somewhere else?

> "Swerve not from the path of justice and righteousness and you will outshine the royal glory of queens on the throne" (p. 200).

If she does not deviate from the path of justice and righteousness, she will get the remuneration that outshine the royal glory of queens! Not simply the royal glory of queens but some thing that 'outshines' it! The remuneration one gets in return for justice and righteousness is 'royal glory'!

"The marriage having failed (attempt to marry without the knowledge of the bridegroom!), the only course for her was to join the Bhikkuni Sangh... she was admitted into it, though she belonged to the lowest caste" (p. 200).

The purpose of getting her head clean shaven was to become a Bhikkuni (a woman monk), wasn't it? Then what else could happen? When will this girl, who became a Bhikkuni, enjoy royal glory? In the 'coming birth'? But there are no such rebirths, are they? Well, when will she enjoy it? Is the life of a woman-monk itself is perhaps a life with royal glory? Yes, because a Bhikkini will have no work to do. She can enjoy feasts at the houses of the rich people: with different kinds of meat, until she said, 'Enough! Enough!' What more royal glory could there be? Have you recalled a point concerning 'untouchability'? Has Ambedkar, who argued at great length elsewhere that untouchability was absent during the Buddha's time, noted the fact that the Buddha himself admitted untouchables into his Order? Well, let that be! How do Burmese Buddhists feel happy if some one dies while the Buddha so clearly says that death causes sorrow? Why didn't Ambedkar get this question?

The 'barren metaphysics' is not yet over. Ambedkar has cited many more sermons of the Buddha, which the human kind has to learn. We have to examine at least some of them.

"It is to cultivate detachment, detachment from property, from friends, etc., that he said. 'All these are impermanent'." (p. 241).

If 'friends' are not permanent, the attachments that people cultivate for friends and the people who cultivate them are also not permanent, are they? When everything is impermanent and not eternal, any two things (the people and their attachments) coincide or do not conflict with one another. Then what is the problem here?

"Let no man have attachment to anything; loss of it gives pain. Those who love nothing, and hate nothing have no fetters" (p. 357).

If people do not have pain because they have no attachment, they will also have no joys, will they?

"From craving is born sorrow, from craving is born fear. To him who is wholly free from craving there is neither sorrow nor fear" (p. 357).

To wish to be free from craving and fear—is this not a kind of craving?

"One who harbours the thought: "He reviled me, maltreated me, overpowered me, robbed me,' in him anger is never stilled" (p. 359).

This means a person should not get angry even if others revile, maltreat, overpower or rob him. Well, then, will Ambedkar preach the same thing to untouchables: that they should not be angry toward Hindus whatever they do? Is the sermon—that teaches the sufferers not to be angry—in favour of sufferers or oppressors, the Buddha and Mr.Ambedkar?

> "It is not I...that quarrel with the world, ..but the world that quarrels with me. A teacher of the truth does not quarrel with anyone in the world" (p.447).

The teacher of the truth quarrels with those who teach untruth. Truth quarrels with untruth. If truth is friendly with untruth without quarreling, then that truth cannot be a truth at all.

Now look at this story which surpasses all other stories and which preaches, 'abandon all longing'. (This is a condensed narration, from pp: 579-80). Once the Buddha was staying at Kapilavastu in the fig-tree park. Then a disciple called Mahanama asked the Buddha,

> "how a discreet layman who is sick, in pain, grievously afflicted, should be cheered by another discreet lay-brother?"

The Buddha explained as follows: 'Cheer him with the Four Comfortable Assurances. Take comfort in the Norm and in the virtues dear to the norm kept unbroken and unsolved which tend to the balance of mind. Tell him to abandon all longing for everything. Suppose the sick man wants to see his parents. Then tell him, "My dear good man, you are sure to die. Whether you have longing for your parents or not you will die. So, abandon your longing to see your parents. (That sick man is not in the stage of death. He is in such a stage that he will recover if someone gives him confidence. Then, why does someone say 'you will die'? (Buddha, what is wrong in seeing one's own parents? Is this what one has to say to a sick person who is on his death bed?)

Suppose the sick man says that he abandoned his longing for parents, then tell him, "My good sir, you may have longing to see your children. As you must die in any case, abandon longing for your children. Suppose he says he has abandoned it. But he may have a longing for the five pleasures of the senses. Suppose he expresses that desire. Then tell him, 'My friend, you must die in any case. Heavenly delights are better than the five pleasures of the senses. So clear your mind from human joys and fix it on the joys of the Four Great Deva Kings" (Is fixing on the joys of the Four Great Deva Kings not a 'longing'?)

Supposing he says, his mind is so fixed. Then tell him to fix his

mind on the Brahman world. (The fellow, overburdened by this sort of crazy sermon, might have already left for the Brahman world! He himself will witness it.) Suppose he says he has fixed his mind so. Then tell him that 'even the Brahma world is impermanent. Therefore concentrate on cessation from the personal. If the sick person says that he has done so, then it amounts to his emancipation.

My dear reader sire, this is the path of enlightenment , which Lord Ambedkar learnt from Lord Buddha in respect of cheering a sick person, and communicated to all of us! He communicated it in a lucid manner this great knowledge and high values consisting of the Brahma world and four Great Deva kings.

The illiterate rustic people or, to use a Telugu idiom, 'those who do not have a single letter in their mouth', too knew that , when a person falls sick, we have to enable him to see whomever he wants to see, offer him whatever kind of food he wants and give him courage, 'Don't worry. Nothing will happen to you. You will recover soon and become normal'. Otherwise, if people throw the sick person into the forest, he will groan for a few days, later recover and then come back to the village happily. A seriously ill person will recover happily if Buddhist monks do not surround the sick person like the messengers of death and harass him, 'you will die! You will die! You will die! Abandon that longing! Abandon this longing!'

The Buddha—is he so crude? If some one calls the Buddha's theory of Four Great Deva Kings, 'Barren Metaphysics' will there be a more charming name than that?

There is a criticism against the Buddha's theory of rebirth. "The Buddha denies the existence of Soul, then why does he talk of rebirth" —this is the criticism.

To this Ambedkar replies: The human body is composed of the four elements of existence. When the body dies, those elements join the mass of similar elements floating in space and a new birth takes place. This is what the Buddha meant by rebirth. It is a rebirth for those elements (p. 330).

> "He (the Buddha) believed in the regeneration of matter and not in the birth of the soul" (p. 332).

Why should the Buddha, who thinks that it is unnecessary to talk about what happens after death, say that the matter in the dead body will have rebirth'? To say that matter does not die relates to physics or some

other science but not the science of rebirths. If we talk about the matter in the language of rebirths, it would lead to superstitious notions only.

21) For whom is it possible?

There is an accusation against Buddhism that it is pessimistic. This accusation surprises Ambedkar.

> "It is rather surprising that a reference to Dukkha should give cause to such an accusation" (p. 512).

Ambedkar questions:

> "Karl Marx also said that there is exploitation in the world and the rich are being made richer and the poor are being made poorer. And yet nobody has said that Karl Marx's doctrine is pessimism. Why then should a different attitude be shown to the Buddha's doctrine?"

Ambedkar thinks that he raised a very great question.

Ashtanga Marga was the path of liberation, which the Buddha proposed. Class struggle is the path of liberation from exploitation, which Marx proposed. If Ambedkar does not understand as to why people call the Buddha's theory 'pessimism' and why they don't call Marx's theory pessimism and moreover if Ambedkar thought such an attitude as discriminatory, is it possible for any one to make a person—who closed his eyes or to use a Telugu metaphor, eyes of knowledge—understand the actual point?

22)What does the Buddha say about 'property'?

Every philosopher expresses his view on many issues: concerning god, religion, human nature and many more issues. Of all these, his views on property are important! We have to specially note what a philosopher said on riches and wealth, wealth and poverty, masterhood and servitude.

Now let us see the Buddha's views on property. Ambedkar cited these views without criticism at any point. This means Ambedkar is agreeing with the Buddha's views on property too. The Buddha's views are the following.

> "Men are born unequal. Some are robust, others are weaklings. Some have more intelligence, others have less or none. Some have more capacity, others have less. Some are well-to-do, others are poor. All have to enter into what is called the struggle for existence" (p. 308).

Here the Buddha is treating differences between the 'well-to-do' and 'poor' people as natural differences like physical differences between people (robust vs. weaklings). Moreover, he says 'rich-poor' differences are for the sake of struggle for existence. Which means, for the sake of 'livelihood'! Each has his own livelihood! Both are same! There is no wonder if the Buddha talks of this theory of 'struggle for existence'! It is surprising to note that Ambedkar too talks about it!

Once Anathapindika asked the Buddha 'what things are welcome, pleasant, agreeable, to the householder but which are hard to gain'. Buddha said,

> "Of such things the first is to acquire wealth lawfully. The second is to see that your relations also get their wealth lawfully" (p. 459).

"Lawfully"! Which means, as per the laws! If a person acquires 'property' as per law, it is righteousness! What sort of laws existed during the Buddha's time? There existed laws that permitted Masters to own, sell, buy or kill slaves. If they did so, it was right because laws permitted it. If the laws say that slaves do not have rights, it is justified. The Buddha might not know that those laws were improper and the masters themselves had framed them. Does Ambedkar too not know about it?

> "Take the case of Ariyan disciple with riches gotten by work and zeal, gathered by the strength of the arm, earned by the sweat of the brow; justly obtained in a lawful way he makes himself happy, glad, and keeps that great happiness; he makes his parents happy, glad, and keeps them so; so likewise his wife and children, his slaves, his workfolk and men" (p. 587).

Note that this Ariyan (Aryan) disciple has slaves and workfolk. Which means, this disciple is a slave master. Needless to say specially how this master got riches. But according to the Buddha, he earned these riches by the strength of his arm and by the sweat of his brow. To be a slave master is a 'lawful way'. In whatever way a master may earn, it amounts to earning by hard work and the sweat of the brow. If His Excellency the King sits on the throne it is also done by the sweat of the brow! If his minister sits on another seat, it is also done by the sweat of the brow! Persons who sit on thrones also get 'sweat', don't they? Even though there are servants who fan them!

Shouldn't we praise Ambedkar's courage once again for he informed human kind the Buddha's words that the slave masters earned the riches in a lawful way?

The Buddha, in the term 'Samma Ajivo' of his Ashtanga Marga, said that 'every individual has to earn his livelihood and bad ways of earning

are those which cause injury or injustice to others'. Citing this point, can any one argue that the Buddha said not to earn through bad ways and he advised every one to do labour for their livelihood? No, it is not possible to argue like that. It is because, to say that 'one should earn his livelihood' does not imply that the Buddha said, 'till land! Weave cloth! Make shoes!' Earning livelihood means the way the masters earn money. It is earning livelihood if kings rule their kingdoms! The Buddha does not mean that kings should till the land.

"Bad ways of earning are those which cause injury or injustice to others", said the Buddha, didn't he? What does injustice mean in the view of the Buddha? Did the Buddha explain which ways are good and which are bad to earn livelihood? Nowhere did he say this. All the prevailing ways, which he saw, were just and lawful. Then what does 'injustice' mean? He has not explained it anywhere.

When one does not know which is the just and which is the unjust way of earning property, he won't know that his way of earning causes injury to others. Does the slave master know that his owning slaves as private property causes injury to the slaves and his action is injustice? Does the king think that the wars that he wages for the purpose of expanding his empire will cause injury to the soldiers and people? Does a money lender think that his business causes injury to the borrowers who pay him interest? (Ambedkar himself did not consider money lending as injustice. In that case is it necessary to talk about the Buddha's time?)

The wrong-doer does not understand that his deed will cause injury to others if he does not realize that it is wrong. Or, the person who does wrong will not bother about the injury to others if he has a vested interest in doing wrong. Therefore, all the bad ways, which the masters follow to earn properties, will appear as just and lawful ways in the view of the Buddha too! Also in the view of Ambedkar!

> "...the Blessed Lord did not comfort the poor by praising their poverty nor did he sublimate poverty as a happy state for man to live in" (p.587).

This is to say that the Buddha did not defend poverty! But this is in the case of masters only! For masters poverty is not a boon. Masters cannot live happily in poverty. Masters feel happy if their wealth increases. All this relates only to masters not slaves.

According to the Buddha, owning of slaves by masters is lawful and just, isn't it? In that situation, will the slaves live in riches and wealth instead of poverty? When slavery is natural, poverty too should be natural. The Buddha assumes the relationship between the master and his slaves

as a natural relationship. However, he would advise the masters to be kind to their slaves.

> "A master should minister to his servants and employees by assigning them work according to their strength, by supplying them with food and wages, by tending them in sickness, by sharing with them unusual delicacies, by granting leave at times. For, servants and employees love their master, they rise before him, they lie down to rest after him, they are content with what is given to them, they do their work well, and they carry about his praise and good fame" (p. 465).

It is the cultural refinement of the Buddha to say that the master should take care of his servants. It is a matter of great compassion! But he knows only to that extent. He did not raise such questions as 'why should one person is living like a servant of another person called master? Why is he like that? All human beings are equal, aren't they?'

But what does it mean if a person of the present day times teaches exactly like the Buddha? This means, that the person has not progressed at all since the days of the Buddha! This also means, that the person has not at all learnt anything from the knowledge that has been in existence for 2,500 years subsequent to the Buddha. This means just as the Buddha did not have certain kinds of questions, the person who teaches the Buddha verbatim too did not have those questions.

Ambedkar narrated at length a story depicting how a king could wonderfully eradicate poverty in his kingdom. (Vol. 3, p. 188 onwards).

> "Long ago the Bodhisattva, it is said, was a king who had obtained his kingdom in the order of hereditary succession. He had reached this state as the effect of his merit,.."

This is how the story began. In the first sentence he became king 'in the order of hereditary'. In the second sentence he reached this position because of his 'merit'. There is no consistency between the first sentence and the second. The entire story runs with this sort of crazy argument.

This man was a monarch over many vassals (subordinate kings). They were obedient to him. This monarch was such a noble person that he promoted the happiness of his subjects whole-heartedly. (There is no other thing than praising kings and emperors that makes Ambedkar glow with ecstasy).

> "Now it once happened that, though protected by his arm, his realm, both in consequence of the faulty actions of its inhabitants and inadvertence on the part of the angels charged with the care of rain,

was afflicted in several districts by drought and the troublesome effects of such a disaster" (p. 189).

Brahmins advised him to perform a sacrifice that 'requires the massacre of many hundreds of living beings'. He did not accept animal sacrifice and said that he would perform a human sacrifice of a thousand evil-doers. He informed his decision by a beat of drum. Owing to 'the fear of death' people abandoned their bad conduct' wholly, observed the 'moral precepts', avoided hatred and enmity, settled their quarrels, began to live with good manners and modesty like those who lived in Krita Yuga. His Excellency the King felt very happy and gave away as much money to people as they wanted. He gathered all beggars into alms-halls and gave them presents daily.

> "So poverty disappeared and the people, having received wealth from the part of the king, dressed and adorned with manifold and fine garments and ornaments exhibited the splendour of festival days" (Vol. 3, p. 193).

This is the story that eradicated poverty very smoothly.

We find beggars throughout the country! But poverty disappears without any trace just because His Excellency the King gives away as much money as people want and because people wear jewellery and new garments. This story entitled 'The story of the sacrifice' is meant to tell us that the King did not perform animal sacrifice, went on for 8 pages with various stupid and scrap stories. This is a stupid story meant to demonstrate how beautifully poverty can be eliminated by following the Buddha's path.

23) A good story

Of all the stories given in volume 11 to elaborate the Buddha's path, there is only one story that is good (p. 298). The story is as follows: "Once upon a time there lived in Shravasti a lady named Videshika, who was reputed gentle and meek, and mild. She had a maid servant named Darkie, a bright girl, an early riser and good worker". One day Darkie thought, 'my master is reputed to be gentle. Won't she get angry at all? Let me see'. Next day, she did not wake early in the morning. The mistress lost her temper and shouted impatiently, "Darkie! Darkie! Why don't you get up?" Then Darkie got up. She did the same thing the next day also. The mistress shouted very angrily, 'why don't you get up?' The third day also Darkie did not get up early. The mistress, "in her anger and displeasure", picked up the lynch-pin and struck the girl on the head with it, drawing blood" (p. 299). The maid servant realized, 'this lady will be gentle if I wake up early in the morning and do the work. Otherwise she too gets angry'!

The Buddha's intention in telling his story was to teach that 'more than Karuna what is necessary is Maitri'. Does it mean there is 'maitri' between the mistress and the maid if the mistress is tolerant even when the maid wakes up late? Even if the maid servant does not wake up early and sleep for some more time, it is she who is expected to do all the household chores. She has to always remain a servant. Then where is the question of her maitri with her mistress?

Mythri is greater than Karuna, says the Buddha. Ambedkar explains the Buddha's meaning of the terms: "Karuna is only love for human beings...Mythri is love for living beings" (p. 297). If we examine the story from this meaning, there is no connection between the sermon and the story. As Darkie is a human being it is enough if her master shows Karuna toward her. There is no need to say in this story that Karuna is greater than Mythri. This point does not apply to this story. Let us examine the matter by giving different meanings. Karuna means kindness, sympathy and the like. These are attitudes, which are shown toward people who live in inferior situation. Whereas Mythri means friendship. This is an attitude shown toward equals. According to this meaning Mythri is greater than Karuna. But in order to establish Mythri between two persons, they have to be 'equal'. Master and servants are not equals. If the master is good he will show Karuna toward his servants. If he is a 'very' good person, he would show 'more Karuna'. But Mythri is not possible between the two. Yet it appears to be possible for those who consider master-servants distinction as natural. What the Buddha did not say in this story is that feelings of masters like gentleness, patience and serenity arise only because they do not perform any labour. If they are people who do labour, they face many kinds of situations concerning that work. They express irritation and agitation. Moreover if it is not independent work but servitude under a master, there arise also fear and dislike for that work.

The gentle smile, serenity and royal glory that glows on the surface of the face of His Excellency the King—who sits on the cushion of the throne without any work—will not glow on the face of a labourer who sweeps the roads and who cleans the toilets. If His Excellency the King steps down from the throne and hold a broomstick, plough, saw or a loom, his face too will fill with the burden of labour and his royal glory is bound to evaporate. This is the secret of the gentle nature of the mistress of Darkie. We can pretty well understand this point in this story.

24) Good sermons

There are some good things in the Buddha's teachings which we have to definitely learn from.

- Know...that there are these two extremes which man ought not to follow—the habitual indulgence on the one hand, of those things whose attraction depends upon the passions, and especially of sensuality—a low and pagan way of seeking satisfaction, unworthy, unprofitable and the habitual practice thereof, and on the other hand, of asceticism or self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable (pp. 120-21).
- The Right path is for the happiness not of the few but of all (p. 370).
- May creatures all abound, in weal and peace; may all be blessed with peace always, all creatures weak or strong, all creatures great and small; creatures unseen or seen dwelling afar or near, born or awaiting birth, may all be blessed with peace! (p. 410).
- If you, on that account, should be angry and hurt, that would stand in the way of your own self-conquest. If, when others speak against us, you feel angry at that, and displeased, would you then be able to judge how far that speech of their's is well said or ill? (pp: 444-4).
- ...courage to stand by what is right even if one is alone (p. 285).
- Far surpassing the fragrance of sandal or incense or lotus or jasmine, is the fragrance of virtue (p. 355).
- Better is the lonely life, for fools companions cannot be (p. 393).
- Without self-culture he is not fit to guide (p. 435).
- The controversies regarding the path cannot be settled by a dictator (p. 548).
- Majority agreements is the way to settle the disputes and not the appointment of a successor (p. 548).
- The flatterer is to be reckoned as a foe in the darkness of a friend (p. 462).
- Where virtue is in danger do not avoid fighting, do not be mealy-mouthed (p. 447).
- Truth is the sweetest of all tastes. The living endowed with wisdom is said to be the noblest thing (p. 582).

These and such others are the sermons that we must learn from the Buddha.

The Buddha did not explain what 'truth' is. Therefore we cannot learn from him what it is! But we can learn from the Buddha the fact that there is something called 'truth'. We can search for it.

25) What did Buddhism do for Shudras?

Ambedkar repeatedly says that Buddhism elevated the position of Shudras and women to a higher level. He observed that under Vedic religion, Shudras and women did not have access to property, education and salvation (by becoming sanyasis) and the Buddha provided them these opportunities and he 'broke' the rules of Aryans (Vol. 13, p. 221).

Ambedkar describes how Buddhism elevated Shudras to a higher level as follows:

> "To put it briefly a Shudra under the Buddhist regime could acquire property, learning and could even become a king. Nay he could even rise to the highest rung of the social ladder occupied by the Brahmin in the Vedic Regime. The Buddhist order of Bhikshus was counterpart of the Vedic order of Brahmins....The Shudra could never aspire to be a Brahmin in the Vedic regime but he could become a Bhikshu and occupy the same status and dignity as did the Brahmin...The elevation of the status of the Shudras and women was so much the result of the gospel of Buddhism that Buddhism was called by its enemies as the Shudra religion (i.e. the religion of the low classes)." (Vol. 3, pp: 309-10).

Ambedkar is telling us that Bhikshus under Buddhism occupied the same highest position, which Brahmins occupied in the Vedic religion.

If a Bhikshu in Buddhism is superior to others just as Brahmins are superior to others in the Vedic religion, it means that there are hierarchical differences under Buddhism also. Then what is the specialty of Buddhism? What 'equality' did it propose?

Let us suppose that one or two out of hundred Shudras became kings due to the opportunities, which Buddhism provided. This means they became representatives of the wealthy. If one Shudra becomes a king, countless Shudras will become 'servants' of that king. What can Buddhism do to those Shudras who are servants? We have to conclude that Buddhism was useful only to Shudras who turned into kings or Brahmins (Bhikshus).

There is nothing to feel over-joyous on the part of Shudras just because one Shudra became a king and four Shudras became Brahmins (Bhikshus). When some individuals from Shudra varna become dominators over them, Shudras should learn to totally oppose and not respect them.

Just as no religion has any way to change the social status of countless poor and lower castes, Buddhism too has no solution.

26) What did Buddhism do for women?

Ambedkar says that Buddhism brought about a great change in the case of women as well.

> "Similar change is noticeable in the case of women. Under the Buddhist regime she became a free person. Marriage did not make her a slave. For marriage under the Buddhist rule was a contract. Under the Buddhist Regime she could acquire property, she could acquire learning and what was unique, she could become a member of the Buddhist order of Nuns and reach the same status and dignity as a Brahmin" (Vol. 3, p. 310).

How surprising is this? Did woman become a free person under Buddhism? Did she acquire property and learning? Was marriage a contract based on free choice? What are all these utterances? Is it to declare that all these features were present in Buddhism just because they were absent under Hindu religion?

Ambedkar himself observed in 'Castes in India' (Vol. 1) that male domination is present in society. This we have seen in the beginning itself. Now Ambedkar is saying that male domination has disappeared due to Buddhism.

While stating that the Buddha held very noble views concerning women, Ambedkar cited 2 stories (in Vol. 11).

Let us take a look at these stories.

A story (p. 466): Once the Buddha went for meal to a householder named Uggaha. "Uggaha served with his own hand and satisfied the Exalted One with plenty of food" (p. 466). After the meal, Uggaha requested the Buddha, 'My daughters will go to their husbands' houses after marriage. Lord, please teach them a few good things'. Lord Buddha gave the following 'good advice': 'You have to be in love with the husbands whomever your parents have brought for you for the sake of your comfort and happiness. You have to wake up before your husbands wake up and go to sleep after they go to sleep. You have to discharge your duties voluntarily. Talk gently and sweetly. You have to treat with honour and respect all the relatives of the husbands. As soon as they arrive, offer them a seat and drinking water. You have to learn and acquire skill concerning home crafts like spinning wool or cotton. You have to get work done by the workfolk in the husband's house, give them food. Keep money, grain, silver and gold secure which your husbands bring and protect them from thieves'. The daughters of Uggaha listened to everything that the Buddha said and were happy.

The Buddha said the same words, which all people usually say to girls. How did the situation of women change due to this preaching which tells them that it is not proper to either eat or sleep before the husbands do?

Another story (p. 376): Once Pasendi, the king of Shravasti, was sitting with the Buddha. A messenger came from the palace and informed him that queen Mallika had delivered a baby girl. As soon as he heard the news, the king became sad and depressed. Then the Buddha began to console the king, 'Oh king! Why do you worry? A daughter may prove a better offspring than a son!'

To say that 'a daughter is greater than a son' is as bad as saying 'a son is greater than a daughter'. Can't the Buddha, who talks rationally, speak better words than these? Should he say that 'men and women are equal in nature. Human kind cannot exist without either. We have to raise whatever child (male or female) we get' or should he say that female child is greater?

The Buddha explained how the greatness of the daughter will be proven: she may receive appreciation from her mother-in-law as wise and virtuous. She may receive appreciation as a true wife and a daughter. The boy that she may bear may do great deeds and rule great realms! He may become country's guide!

The Buddha's consolation satisfied king Pasendi. This is the Buddha's teaching! That female should grow wise, virtuous and become a true wife. Okay, she would do that. It is alright to that extent. But she should not give birth to a daughter like her mother. She has to give birth to a female child. If she gives birth to a daughter, she cannot be a great woman. Okay, it is also not a problem. This mother, let us say, will pass this peril on because half of the children that mothers give birth include sons also. The main peril is that the son must become a king! If this does not happen, it is no use even if she gave birth to a male child. A mother is not wise and virtuous if she gives birth to a son who cannot become a king.

A man who is a king alone will be the country's guide. How can a fellow who is not a king give guidance?

What did the Buddha say to a fool who was sad because he got a female child? 'That she (the female child) may give birth to male child! And that the male child may become a king!'

Ambedkar cited these two stories to say, 'Look, how noble the Buddha's ideas towards women'! From these stories, is it also not clear what Ambedkar's ideas are toward women?

These stories demonstrate that the situation of women has changed, he claims!

Ambedkar further says that Buddhism provided an opportunity for women to become Bhikshus and that amounts to transformation of women into free persons.

If we keep aside the question, 'Is conversion into Bhikku a symbol for freedom?', we find many more women who did not become Bhikkhunis. How did Buddhism change the lives of those women? This means all women should become Bhikkhunis if their problems are to be solved! Because it is a symbol for freedom! This is a great solution for women!

In fact the Buddha initially opposed a lot to admit women as Bhikkhunis. He said it was not possible. He agreed only after Ananda argued at length. It is Ambedkar who gave this information (p. 193).

There are some sermons of the Buddha: that society should have concern for women, that women should not be oppressed and women should not be subjected to ill-treatment and so on. All such sermons indicate the Buddha's goodness but they were not at all enough to change the situation of women.

Changing the situation of women is not something that happens by petty sermons, fables or idle stories.

We have to first recognize the fact that men and women are not equal either at 'home' or 'outside' home. We have to understand the reason why they are not equal and why men are dominating. We have to understand the division of labour that has been confining women to housework and men to outside work.

Equality is absent not only between men and women but also between men and men. There is no equality between the rich and the poor. This is a problem of 'exploitation of labour'. The problem of 'division of labour' arose from this.

The inequality between men and women is connected with the 'exploitation of labour' and its consequence 'division of labour'. This means, unless we are able to solve the problem of 'exploitation of labour', equality either between men or women or between any two individuals is not possible. It is nothing but craziness to say that all kinds of equality had been formed long ago due to Buddhism.

We should not criticise the Buddha saying that he did not change the situation of women. But we should not remain uncritical of those who make false statements that the Buddha raised women's status to a very high level!

27) Buddha visits home and returns

The Buddha, seven years after he left the country, visited his country again along with his band of followers at the call of his father. Seeing the Buddha's 'beauty, dignity and lustre', his parents, relatives and people were speechless. When his father looked sad, the Buddha gave a sermon. The son praised the father, 'your heart is full of love. Show your love to all your fellow-beings'. After the son's praise for the father, the father too praised his son.

The father informed his son that Yashodhara had got her head shaven, abandoned ornaments and ate in an earthen bowl. the Buddha went to Yashodhara and said, 'your purity, gentleness and devotion had been invaluable to me as a Bodhisattva when I was aspiring to attain enlightenment' (p. 166).

In the olden days, they used to show certain things in films. While the husband wanders across various places to accomplish some great deeds and face hardships, his wife wears a glittering silk saree, gathers the pictures of gods, sings sorrowful songs and worship the gods. The gods stare at the beauty of that woman from top to bottom and relieve her husband from hardships. The same thing, it seems, had happened in the case of the Buddha too! The Buddha, who wandered, accomplished the act of enlightenment just because Yashodhara was pure with noble virtues! Oh, this is the actual secret of the matter!

The Buddha's seven year old son Rahula came to his father and asked him, 'what do you give me as inheritance?'

'Path of righteousness is my spiritual treasure. I give it to you in plenty. Will you join my brotherhood', said the Buddha to his son. The son agreed and joined the brotherhood of the Bhikshus.

The Buddha began his return journey from his country. His father's minister approached him, caught hold of him on his way back, asked him to come back and rule the kingdom. (Should he ask then—keeping quiet until he was about to leave?) The Minister gave sermons to the Buddha, the Buddha again gave sermons to the minister and sermons again from both the sides continued.

Finally the Buddha said, 'This doubt whether anything exists or not,

is not to be solved for me by another's words. I will myself grasp whatever is the truth concerning it' (p.175). (What is this? Has he not cleared his doubt? Should he have to find out the 'truth' again now? No, it is not so. The problem is that Ambedkar is narrating things in a repetitive manner without following any order or sequence!) Here the Buddha said one good thing.

> "But having seen that this 'sacred tradition' is uncertain, know that that only is right which has been uttered by the trustworthy; and know that trustworthiness means the absence of faults; he who is without faults will not utter an untruth" (p. 176).

These words are like guidelines. For example, when we have a doubt about an issue, there is no one who can properly explain it. In that case, we have to depend on a sincere person. A sincere person, even if he does not know about the issue properly, will say whatever he believes and he won't have any selfish interest. He won't tell fictitious things for his own benefit. Therefore, whenever we get doubts it is proper to depend on good people. These are very good words.

It is the specialty of the Buddha to utter such 'logical' words.

The Buddha refused to convert again into a householder and left the place.

28) Essence of Buddhism

There is nothing more to examine Buddhism as depicted by Ambedkar. Whatever we have seen so far is its essence. The same essence continues a few more hundreds of pages with new descriptions and new praise. The whole of it is nothing but 'Ashtanga Marga'. All people should be pure, righteous and virtuous! This is what the entire Buddhism constitutes!

In Buddhism, all the rational views concerning nature are logical, we may accept them. But Kapila had already said this. There is nothing special, which the Buddha said in this regard. 'Human beings should be kind to other living beings'—this principle also relates to nature. This will enhance the cultural refinement of human beings. We have to accept this.

From what he said concerning society, we have to accept the principle that 'human beings should acquire good qualities' and so on. This will refine human conduct. This is what we can learn from Buddhism. There is nothing more than this. Buddhism is not aware of such problems as 'riches and poverty', 'master-servant' relations and 'property'. There is no scope for Buddhism to know these problems. This means Buddhism does not know anything concerning 'human relations' (that is, labour relations).

If we examine the question of 'sorrow' or 'suffering': We need not specially say that there is sorrow in nature. Because, there is not only sorrow but also happiness. If ill-health is sorrow, good health is happiness. If darkness is sorrow, light is happiness. These contradictions are natural. It is not possible to dispense with these contradictions. Even Buddhism too cannot change them. To say that 'there is sorrow in nature' is not knowledge. There are both sorrow and happiness in nature.

If we consider sorrow in 'society', this does not apply to all. Only some people have this sorrow. For example, all people do not suffer due to 'untouchability'; only some people do. Sorrow due to poverty is not for all people; only for some people. Sorrow due to slavery/servitude is not for all; only for some. Sorrow concerning the increase in wealth is not for all; only for some people. Thus it is the same case with regard to any sorrow that people experience in society. It is possible to prevent all this sorrow. But, the Buddha's theory does not give this solution.

There is no solution to the problem of sorrow in nature. There is solution for the problem of sorrow in society. If we don't make a distinction between the kinds of sorrow and mix up sorrow in nature and sorrow in society it appears as though there is no solution for sorrow. On the whole, there is no knowledge, which the Buddha can offer in the case of 'sorrow'.

The Buddha's story went on like an ant hill of superstitious beliefs at every step. The story, which Ambedkar narrated, is filled with more superstitions than other writers' works on the Buddha. According to Ambedkar's story, the Buddha appears as the stooge of the wealthy and a big hyporcrite. Says one thing and does another! No consistency between any two things.

In fact, the term the Buddha (meaning: the one who attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree) itself is a big superstitious notion. Knowledge does not come under trees. It is only a superficial knowledge if a person, who is in the stage of not knowing anything about human society, talks about human relations. The Buddha too offered the superficial knowledge. Even today, we will be in the same stage at which the Buddha was, if we don't know anything about knowledge.

There is some logic and some compassion in the character of the Buddha. He was a reformer in some aspects. That is his specialty!

If some one wrote the Buddha's story in a somewhat more careful way than Ambedkar, the shortcomings in the story would have been fewer. But even then, none can show great knowledge and greatness beyond 'reform'. There are many doubts regarding the words, which are in currency as the Buddha's words. Ambedkar says:

"One has to be careful in accepting what is said in the Buddhist canonical literature as being the word of the Buddha... Anything which is rational and logical, other things being equal, may be taken to be the word of the Buddha" (pp: 350-51).

Can't others' words (which are in currency as the Buddha's words) —apart from the Buddha's words—be logical? Will others' words be invariably illogical? What moral right does Ambedkar have to talk of 'rationality' and 'logic' since he himself filled the Buddha's story with miracles, supernatural powers and gods?

The eulogy in the Buddha's story of Ambedkar is disgusting.

"... he remembered hearing from old and aged Brahmins... that those who became... all enlightened, reveal themselves when their praises are sung" (p. 568).

Ambedkar has a lot of respect for the sayings of Brahmins! He reproduced without leaving a single letter the eulogy of the Buddha by a Brahmin named Sale:

"Perfect of body, goodly, Lord, art thou, well grown, well liking, golden-hued, with teeth which gleam lustre; vigour fills the frame; the body's full perfection manifests each single sign that marks a Superman. Clear-eyed and handsome, tall, upright art thou, effulgent as a sun among thy train, so debonair, so golden-hued; why waste thy beauty's prime as homeless anchorite. As world-wide monarch thou shouldn't ride in State; and indeed from sea to sea should own thy sway. Proud princes shall thy village headmen be; rule thou mankind, as sovereign, king of kings" (p. 568-9).

"Ananda describes the colour of his body as exceedingly clear and bright so much so that the pair of cloth of gold when placed on the body of the Blessed One appears to have lost its splendour" (p. 569).

In this manner, the book is full of praises! Though the eulogists of the Buddha apparently say that the Buddha became a sanyasi for the welfare of the world, they don't really like his conversion. 'He should have continued as King. He should have crushed all kings, plundered their kingdoms and ruled the earth till the seas—this was the opinion of all the Buddha's eulogists including Ambedkar! They can't attach value to these eulogies if they did not have this kind of opinion. Those who praise the golden complexion of a body are saying that people without that complexion are not great people! Is the bodily colour of Ambedkar gold or not? Is the complexion of untouchables gold? Does it not mean that giving greater value to a golden complexion is to degrade those who don't have such a complexion? What is this description of a sanyasi as somebody

who can rule all the kings? Where did Ambedkar's logic culminate, to use a Telugu idiom, in which river like Ganga?)

29) The Buddha breathed his last

The Buddha lived up to the age of 80 years. During his life time he centred his activities in towns like Kapilavastu, Vaishali, Shravasti and Rajagraha, travelled almost the entire northern part of India and propagated his doctrine.

The Buddha observed that listeners of sermons are of three kinds. Some are wooden-headed. They hear everything verbatim. But they don't take anything into their brain. The second kind of people listen enthusiastically. They even put counter questions. But they shake off whatever they have heard. The third kind of listeners listen to everything carefully. They take it seriously. Try to implement it. Then practise it.

Yashodhara came to the Buddha at the age of 78.

"She told him that she was to die that very night" (p. 535).

(In Ambedkar's stories, dying is also subject to individual's decision!)

Sariputta too died in his village.

During the same period, Mahamogallan was murdered.

Once severe famine ravaged the city of Vesali. As soon as the Buddha entered rain fell in torrents and famine disappeared (p. 541).

Later the Buddha went to Pava and stayed in the mango grove of Chunda.

"Next day Chunda made ready in his dwelling place sweet rice and cakes and some preparation of Sukara-Madhava" (pork).

The food, which Chunda served, did not suit the Buddha. He fell seriously ill. He suffered from Dysentery, sharp and shooting pain. The sickness led to his death (p. 543).

"The Blessed One, bore pain without complaint" (Against whom will he complain? If he wants to complain he has to complain against himself for he ate pork at the age of 80 years. Against whom will he complain except himself? Mr. Ambedkar, do you always and everywhere praise the Buddha? The Buddha said that 'no flatterer is to be reckoned as a foe in the likeness of a friend', didn't he? You yourself have mentioned these words, haven't you? Do you forget everything every time or to use a Telugu

metaphorical expression, do you feel every time an empty stomach despite eating a lot?

In his last days, the Buddha tells his disciple Subhadda that Ashtanga Marga is part of his Dhamma and it is the best of all paths (p. 550).

The Buddha said to Ananda:

"let the extreme penalty be applied to Channa when I am gone... He should be left alone" (p. 552).

The Buddha who fell ill in Pava went to Kushinara. He said to Ananda, 'At the third watch of the night the utter passing away of the Tathagata will take place' (p. 553). Ananda said,

> "Let not the Blessed One die in this wattled and daub town in the midst of the jungle. For Lord there are great cities, such as Champa, Rajagraha, Savathi, Saketa, Kosambi and Benaras. Let the Blessed One die in one of them" (p. 555).

Do you know what the Buddha told Ananda?

> "Say not so, Ananda! Say not so, Ananda. This Kushinara, Ananda, was the capital of king Maha-Sudassana under the name of Keshavati" (p.555).

This means, the Buddha is saying, 'this is not a small village; this is not a place without reputation. Once this place was the capital city of a great king, do you know?'

What the Buddha, in fact, should say? "All places are the same in Nature, aren't they? Do we need greater cities to spend the last hours of our life?" But according to the Buddha, all places are not the same. The Buddha, who says that he treats land as land, does not treat land as land in reality. He attaches value to those cities, which were capitals of kings. Ananda himself should not have uttered words like: 'You should select bigger towns'. If he spoke so, the Buddha should have criticised him. But the Buddha also feels that capital cities of kings alone are great, and hence he expressed the same opinion. This is the noble idea concerning land, which an 80-year old experienced philosopher and his closest disciple held!

All those who wrote the Buddha's stories are sycophants of kings and their capital cities. Hence they wrote stories with such ideas! They chose only such stories!

> "And in the third part of the night, as previously announced, the Blessed One breathed his last" (p. 555).

It was 483 B.C. At the midnight of Vaisakha purnima. Then the question as to how to conduct the last rites arose. Ananda said, 'We will do what people do for kings'.

Look what sort of fellows are these great sanyasis! They always glorify that Goutama abandoned his kingdom, don't they? But they compare everything with kings! Every thing should happen as it happens in the case of kings! Why should things not happen as they happen in the case of sanyasis? In fact none of the sanyasis has any respect for remuneration. All their attention is on the luxuries of kings!

Ambedkar does not express even an atom of dissatisfaction or ciritcism against these trends. The entire Buddhism, which Ambedkar showed, is a happy narration of royal luxuries.

Ananda describes how last rites are conducted for kings:

> "They wrap the body of a king of kings in a new cloth. When that is done they wrap it in cotton-wool. When that is done they wrap it in a new cloth and so on till they have wrapped the body in five hundred successive layers of both kinds. Then they place the body in an oil vessel of iron and cover that close up with another oil vessel of iron. They then build a funeral pyre of all kinds. This is the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings" (pp: 557-8).

They did the same thing for Lord Buddha also. They gathered garlands and perfumes. They made decorations. Dancing, hymns and music went on. The whole thing thus went on for six days and on the seventh day they carried the dead body and set fire to it. 'The mortal remains of the Blessed One were reduced to ashes'.

All the kings sent messengers for a portion of the remains from the ashes. They divided the remains into eight parts and shared them. Later stupas arose in every land.

With this, the entire information given in the book "The Buddha and His Dhamma" is over. This is what I have narrated very briefly at every point. You will get the entire information if you read the original (Vol.11).

So far we have seen the whole of Buddhism as narrated by Ambedkar. The Buddha's story as narrated in books written by others may be different from Ambedkar's narration. We are not concerned with those stories. We are concerned only with what Ambedkar narrated.

The next step is to compare the theory of the Buddha and the theory of Marx. Ambedkar himself did this job in his essay *Buddha or Karl Marx?* Now we have to examine that essay too. If we examine the two, we will know whose theory is better and whom we should follow. Therefore, let us begin to examine that essay.

16 AMBEDKAR ON MARXISM

We have examined all the views of Ambedkar concerning Buddhism. Now we have to see his views on Marxism.

1) 'Buddha or Karl Marx?': the essay begins!

This essay is included in volume 3. The date of its composition is not clear. But other pieces of evidence indicate that he wrote this article around 1956. In the same period, he wrote "The Buddha and His Dhamma".

What Ambedkar said in this essay is that the Buddha had already talked of Communism a long time ago much earlier than Marx! 'Both said the same thing. Both have the same goal ("end"). However, they differ in the case of the 'means' to achieve the end. The means which Marx suggested are totally wrong. The Buddha's path is the best one'—This is what Ambedkar intended to say in his article.

> "The differences are about the means. The end is common to both" (Vol. 3, p. 450).

Hence, the entire human kind round the world should follow the path of the Buddha, instead of Marx's, for their liberation from sorrow and suffering! This is what Ambedkar discussed in this essay. Now, we have to examine his discussion.

(All the quotations cited in this chapter, unless and otherwise specifically mentioned, are from **volume 3** only).

In other contexts, Ambedkar mentioned that, in order to elaborate the Buddha's theory, he relied on Nikayas, Tripitakas and Jataka Kathas. But nowhere did he mention the source books for his elaboration of Marx's theory. How did Ambedkar come to know about Marx's theory? Through which books? Is it merely through 'hearsay' knowledge or due to having read something? We do not find this anywhere in his volumes. This information is absent even in an essay which is specially entitled *Buddha or Karl Marx?* and which undertook a 'theoretical discussion'. We find criticism of and comments on Marx's theory in almost all volumes of Ambedkar.

This essay—which says that the Buddha's theory is greater than Marx's theory—is very short. It is only 22 pages. But we need to examine each and every sentence. Because, every sentence in this essay attempts to tell us how Buddhism is superior to Marxism and he gives arguments only to tell this point. Hence we have to examine every argument.

The Buddha was born in 563 BC. Marx was born in 1818 AD. There is a distance of 2381 years between the two.

This essay begins with the sentence:

> "A comparison between Karl Marx and the Buddha may be regarded as a joke" (p. 441).

Yes, this is a joke but it is a joke not in terms of 'distance in time' but in terms of 'distance in content'!

Aristotle too lived 2 thousand years ago (384-322 BC). He too is far from Marx. But he initiated research on 'value' and 'money'. The question 'what is money'—which Aristotle raised—got an answer 'money means human labour only'—which Marx understood. This means, it took about 2 thousand years to understand what money is. However distant Aristotle and Marx are, there is no oddity in comparing the two because both had investigated the same question. But a comparison between the Buddha and Marx appears to be strange since there is no similarity between the two in the 'content'. We have to examine how Ambedkar can deal with this oddity.

In the beginning of his essay Ambedkar hesitates a little:

> "Marx is so modern and the Buddha so ancient! The Marxists may say that the Buddha as compared to their master must be just primitive... What could a Marxist learn from the Buddha? What can the Buddha teach a Marxist?" (p. 441)

But it is a great blunder if Marxists think that they don't have anything to learn from others. They can learn all the good things that the Buddha taught. They can learn even from those who are still 'primitive'. Marxism would not have formed if there was no orientation to learn. Hence, it is meaningless to doubt that Marxists do not like to learn from others.

> "If the Marxists keep back their prejudices and study the Buddha and understand what he stood for I feel sure that they will change their attitude" (p. 441).

Let us definitely do so! We have already studied the Buddha to a large extent. We have understood the cause for which he stood. Further we will see it in this essay also again. Let us definitely change our attitude if necessary. Those who want the truth should accept anything that is good anywhere.

Well, will either Ambedkar or Amberkarists study Marxism and understand the cause for which Marx stood? Will they change their attitude if necessary?

It has already been proved that they won't change. Ambedkar's comparison and discussion of the Buddha imply that he has already studied both the theories. Even after studying it, he concluded that the Buddha's theory is superior to Marx's theory, didn't he? This means he has not changed his attitude even after knowing Marxism, has he? Marxists have to examine Buddhism. Ambedkarists should examine Marxism. They have to form their attitude only after examining every thing.

A discussion is a discussion irrespective of whether any person or group of persons learn or not. It has to continue, doesn't it?

2) According to Ambedkar, **Marxism is useless!**

Ambedkar briefly enumerated what the Buddha taught in the form of 25 points:

> "I enumerate them below as I have understood them from my reading of the Tripitika" (p. 441 onwards).

We have already seen these points earlier. Hence I leave out certain items and give some important things as 13 points.

(1) 'The creed of the Buddha'

1. Religion is necessary for a free society.

(By a 'free society', Ambedkar means a society with features of 'liberty, equality and fraternity').

2. Not every religion is worth having.

3. Society is divided into two classes, owners and workers.

(We should not call it a religion if there is no god. The custom so far has been to call it religion when it is based on the concept of god. The term 'religion' does not apply to a way of living based on rationalism. Hence, one should not call the Buddha's preaching a religion but Buddhism. But Ambedkar calls it a religion. He insists on others calling it so too) (Vol. 11, p. 452).

4. It is not enough for morality to be the ideal of life. Since there is no god it must become the law of life.

(Ambedkar simply mentions that 'there is no God'; but all that Ambedkar did is to resort to the miracles of god while narrating the Buddha's story).

5. The function of religion is to reconstruct the world and to make it happy and not to explain its origin or its end.

(Here, we have to understand the word 'world' as 'society').

6. The unhappiness in the world is due to conflict of interest and the only way to solve it is to follow the Ashtanga Marga.

(We have not seen earlier anywhere that the Buddha talked of 'conflict of interest'. We will make critical comments on this point later).

7. The private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another.

(There is a difference between what is said in point 6 and here. The 6th point says that no class among human beings will be happy due to 'conflict of interests'; isn't it! But this 7th point is telling us that the propertyless class will have sorrow and the propertied class will have power instead of sorrow).

8. It is necessary for the good of society that this sorrow be removed by removing the cause.

(All philosophers say that we have to remove the cause. But there are many differences in identifying what the cause is).

9. Maitri or fellowship...even to one's own enemy.

10. Learning without character is dangerous.

('Character' means 'good conduct'. That is following Ashtanga Marga).

11. Nothing is infallible...Everything is subject to inquiry and examination.

(Suppose something stood to inquiry and passed the examination. Then it amounts to having been proved to be infallible, isn't it? Then why should he say 'nothing is infallible'? Aren't certain things be infallible? Is Ashtanga Marga too not infallible according to Ambedkar?)

12. Nothing is final.

(If it is Nature, nothing is final. But if it is a particular phenomenon, a matter, a living being or a thing , it has a beginning and an end. Therefore the statement 'nothing is final' does not apply to everything).

13. War is wrong unless it is for truth and justice.

In this manner, Ambedkar enumerated 25 points and said, "This is the creed of the Buddha in a summary form". He also praised them a lot: "How ancient but how fresh! How wide and how deep are his teachings! (Vol. 3, p. 442).

If we doubt any of these items, there is no way to check their 'source'. In this essay, Ambedkar has mentioned only one word namely 'Tripitaka'. This one word is not enough as evidence.

See item 6! Ambedkar is saying here that the Buddha talked of 'conflict of interest'. But no where does this point find place in the 600-page book on *Buddha and His Dhamma.*

Well what is that conflict of interest? This is in point 7. The private ownership of property brings power to one class, sorrow to another. If the Buddha had realized this fact, what solution did he suggest? For this we have to see the 6th item! He showed Ashtanga Marga as solution.

In item 8, he suggested removing sorrow by removing the cause for sorrow. The cause for sorrow is possession of property by a few persons. To remove this cause, one has to say that only one class should not possess the right over property. Well, did Ashtanga Marga say this? There is no mention of property rights. In that case how can Ashtanga Marga be a means of the resolution of the conflict of interest?

If there are different classes in society and if their interests are different, why do different classes follow a single path called 'Ashtanga Marga'?

Why did the Buddha suggest Ashtanga Marga instead of an appropriate solution if he had realized the fact of conflict of interest? If he had understood the cause and yet not given the appropriate solution, does it not mean he was hypocritical? Ambedkar does not raise these questions.

The problem is: riches for some, poverty for others!

Whereas the solution is: Ashtanga Marga!

Which means, don't speak untruth! Don't steal! Don't debauch! Don't take intoxicants! Don't...! Don't...! Don't....!

Ambedkar did not understand whether the problem and the solution have coherence or consistency. He is interested exclusively in eulogizing Ashtanga Marga! Praises like: How modern! How wide! How deep! How great!

Thus after flooding Buddhism with praises, he talked of Marx's theory in the following 10 points (Vol. 3, p. 443).

(2) Marx's theory

1. The purpose of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to explain the origin of the universe.

(This is wrong. It is not possible to reconstruct society without explaining its origin. We can reconstruct society if necessary only when we understand the origin).

2. The forces which shape the course of history are primarily economic.

(This sentence is correct only if we give the meaning of 'production relations' to the word 'economic forces'. There is no explanation of Ambedkar's meaning of the term 'economic forces').

3. Society is divided into two classes, owners and workers.

(This is correct. 'Owners and workers' have been principal classes since the slave society to the present).

4. There is always a class conflict going on between the two classes.

(This is also correct).

5. The workers are exploited by the owners who misappropriate the surplus value which is the result of the workers' labour.

(This is also correct. But Ambedkar did not mention even in the subsequent points the most important aspect which Marxism says, namely, that exploitation takes place in such forms of income as 'rent-interest-profit'! Nowhere do we find that he understood these forms of income as exploitation of labour).

6. This exploitation can be put an end to by nationalization of the instruments of production i.e. abolition of private property.

(This explanation is not adequate. End of exploitation means 'performance of labour by all'. It is not a correct interpretation of Marxism if we simply talk of 'nationalization of the instruments of production', without mentioning the term 'labour').

7. This exploitation is leading to greater and greater impoverishment of the workers.

(This is correct. Not only labourers becoming poor, but also a large part of that population is becoming unemployed).

8. This growing impoverishment of the workers is resulting in a revolutionary spirit among the workers and the conversion of the class conflict into a class struggle.

(Impoverishment of workers does not automatically result in revolutionary spirit and class struggle. The working class must have a political organization, called Communist Party, which will strive to develop revolutionary spirit and class struggle).

9. As the workers outnumber the owners, the workers are bound to capture the state and establish their rule which Marx called the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(This is correct only if we consider superficial meanings. 'Dictatorship of the proletariat' is necessary not simply to establish state power. It has to abolish all the property rights that favour rent, interest and profit. The class of owners too has to perform labour and become a part of the proletariat. The distinction between 'owners and proletarians' must vanish. Dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to accomplish this task.)

10. These factors are irresistible and therefore Socialism is inevitable.

(This is right in the sense that we discussed above).

After enumerating these 10 points, Ambedkar said:

> "I hope I have reported correctly the propositions which formed the original basis of Marxian Socialism".

Some of the points are right. Some are half-baked. Some very important points are totally missing. The missing points are the following:

1. There is no point which tells that the income of owners in the form of **rent, interest** and **profits**; taxes; unproductive expenditure; and all such things taken together constitute the surplus value of the proletariat. His not mentioning this point means not mentioning the means of exploitation.

2. There is no point which demands that all persons in society must perform labour.

3. There is no point which demands that we must transform division of labour in exploitative societies into 'socialist division of labour'.

4. Another point not mentioned is this: Circulation of money becomes redundant from the stage in which relations of equality are established. This means relations that involve only *use value* calculations and not *value* calculations are possible.

It is not a proper report of Marxism if such important aspects as these are not mentioned.

Ambedkar nowhere mentioned the books based on which he has reported that 'this is Marxism'. Even in the case of his elaboration of Buddhism, he did not show any evidence. Which means, the entire discussion has no basis whatsoever!

After report on Marxism by way of 10 points, he says:

> "Before making a comparison between the ideologies of the Buddha and Karl Marx it is necessary to note how much of this original corpus of the Marxian creed has survived; how much has been disproved by history and how much has been demolished by his opponents" (p.444).

This means, Ambedkar is cautioning the readers to realize that Marxism had already been proved to be useless and 'demolished' by its opponents.

After this caution, he went into a mood of ecstasy and declared that Marxism had been criticised, had broken into pieces as a result of criticism by its opponents and the claim that 'Socialism was inevitable' had been completely disproved.

Marxism has been subjected to criticism, says Ambedkar.

It is very natural that those who are obsessed with exploitation develop antagonism toward a theory which has exposed the truth of exploitation and dump criticism against it. It would be a surprise if this did not happen. Does it mean that Marxism has turned out to be a false theory just because there was criticism against it?

Isn't there any criticism against Buddhism? Ambedkar himself mentioned that there were several kinds of criticism against Buddhism, didn't he? He said repeatedly that Brahmanism defeated Buddhism. (p.275). As soon as the force of Buddhism decreased due to the Hindu religion, why didn't Ambedkar conclude that Buddhism was defeated because it was not a correct theory? Why is he still preaching that Buddhism alone is the best theory and we have to follow it? This means, in the view of Ambedkar, there is one standard for Buddhism and another for Marxism! We don't find any 'honesty' in Ambedkar at any point even accidentally.

He showed 2 reasons to conclude that Marxism is proved to be useless:

1. Marx said that Socialism was inevitable and no human effort was needed. But Socialism in Russia in 1917 was not achieved without human effort. Revolution and bloodshed took place. Hence it was proved that the thesis 'Socialism is inevitable' is false.

2. The thesis that labourers are becoming poorer and poorer is not correct and no one agrees with this thesis.

Because of these 2 reasons, it was proved that Marxism is not a correct theory. This is Ambedkar's argument.

We have to discuss answers to these 2 points of criticism.

1. When we say that 'Socialism is inevitable' does it mean that it will come into being one day on its own without any human effort? Did Marx say so? Then what is the meaning of his suggestions, 'Form a Communist Party! Wage class struggle!'? Aren't they human efforts? Did Marx say that Socialism comes into being without any human efforts?

If these are changes in nature, they take place without human effort.

The sun and moon are revolving on their own. The Full moon nights and dark nights come and go on their own. Heat and rain come and go on their own. For this, people have no need to form 'associations for heat' and 'associations' for rain! They need not wage struggle for full moon nights or dark nights. No human effort is necessary for changes in nature. But it is not the same case with changes in 'society'. Here every change must take place due to human effort. Change takes place only when we make efforts. The old situation remains if no one makes an effort to change.

People who face a problem experience some difficulty. Hence they oppose the problem. If their opposition is adequately clear and strong those people will certainly be able to solve the problem. When there is a problem, the struggle to solve it is inevitable. We talk of 'inevitability' with reference to this struggle. Struggle itself is human effort.

When we say, 'Socialism is inevitable', it means Socialism is inevitable by means of the proletarian struggle against exploitation. It does not, however, mean Socialism is inevitable even without human effort.

When we say, 'Socialism is inevitable', it appears as though Socialism is inevitable without human effort only in the view of such people who do not know the distinction between 'natural phenomena' and 'social phenomena'.

This criticism would not have been so bad if Ambedkar had at least understood that Marxism proposed to wage class struggle and class struggle means human effort.

2. 'Nobody accepts that the proletariat has been progressively pauperised', says Ambedkar. Not 'nobody'. Those who do not accept this include owners—who are eager to consume the labour of labourers—their economists, their philosophers and their defenders. True that all these fellows do not accept this theory. That is natural. They do not accept the very fact that exploitation is taking place. 'Where is the exploitation? Every thing is fine and fair', they say. But what is actually required is not the acceptance by bandits. It is the Working Class who has to accept and understand it! It is this class which has to learn Marxism. When people speak of 'labourers' or 'workers', the usual practice is to consider only those who stand before the machines and work. This is a great mistake. Whatever be the nature of work, wherever be the instruments, all those who work for an owner and receive a 'wage' as income are labourers (workers). Whether the labour is manual labour or mental labour; productive labour or unproductive labour. Whether the person who does labour is a man or a woman, young or old, whether they work with large-scale machinery or tools. These distinctions are not relevant. All those who live on wages (salaries) are labourers.

In order to understand the proposition that labourers become more and more impoverished, one has to first understand the point that the labour of the labourers is split into 2 parts. One part goes to the labourers as their 'wages' and the other part goes to the owner and thereafter it gets distributed into several parts. The splitting of labour of the labourer into 2 parts does not always take place in the same proportions. It takes place depending on the increase in the productive forces and changes in the value of labour power and money and other such factors. This means the 2 portions vary according to the changing circumstances.

It is not possible to understand this unless one understands such categories as the value of labour, money, productivity and the value of labour power. When the productivity increases, the wage increases whether we see it (the wage) in the form of money or articles. This is seen externally. But the proportions of the 2 parts into which the labour of the labourer splits is not seen externally.

What happens when productivity increases is this: The portion which the labourer receives from his labour decreases compared to the past and the portion of 'surplus labour' that goes to the owner increases compared to the past. This kind of change takes place again and again whenever the productivity increases. Which means, the portion that the labourer could use from his labour decreases compared to the past while the portion that he loses increases compared to the past. This is not seen outwardly.

Let us see these changes through 3 examples. In all the 3 examples, we have to consider the labour time of the labourer in the same quantity. Let us suppose it to be 8 hours. Let us see how the portions of labour vary whenever productivity increases.

Portion that the labourer receives	Portion that the labourer does not receive
1) 4 hours	4 hours.
2) 3 hours	5 hours.
3) 2 hours	6 hours.

Though the portion that the labourer receives from his labour decreases, the decreased labour too gives more number of articles than in the past. Owing to the growth of productivity, the decreased labour is able to give more articles than in the past.

As the labourer uses more number of articles compared to the past whenever productivity increases, it appears as if the condition of the labourer has improved a lot. But what actually happens is that the portion

which he receives from his labour keeps declining and the portion which the master receives keeps increasing. This means, while labourers became impoverished, the owners become wealthy. All this is not clear if we see things superficially.

Observe any kind of labourers, we find that the present day labourers use more number of articles than the past labourers. The articles include cycles, scooters, radios, fans, washing machines, refrigerators, TVs and such other modern articles. Seeing this, the capitalist intellectuals ask, 'where is poverty of labourers in these days?' It would be more appropriate to call this perception 'mediocre' knowledge or 'superficial' knowledge.

These intellectuals merely see a few modern articles that the labourers use and ignore the various modern articles that enter the owners' homes, the number of mansions, their lands, bank accounts, shares and constantly growing wealth.

Though the variety of articles which the labourers use increase, those increased articles too are the fruits of their own labour. It is not something which they have exploited from the others. Hence, what one should see actually is not the articles which the labourers use but what they 'lose'.

A mere increase of the variety of articles which labourers use does not imply the disappearance of their servitude and poverty. The fact that the labourers work for their masters implies servitude and the fact that they are giving surplus labour implies poverty. If there was no servitude, the labourers wouldn't have a need to lose surplus labour in order to feed their masters.

Ambedkar says that nobody accepts the proposition that labourers are becoming more and more impoverished. This means, a leader who claims to be the representative of those who do the lowest labour is arguing that those labourers are not becoming more and more impoverished! Who will protect the field, to use a Telugu saying, if the fence itself grazes in the field, unless the field protects itself!

At every point Ambedkar exhibits a lot of hatred for Marxism. This is a very astonishing thing.

After observing that, 'nobody accepts that the proletariat has been progressively pauperised', Ambedkar concludes that 'the same is true about his (Marx's) other premises' (p. 444). In other words, nobody accepts other aspects of Marx's theory also. This is to say that nobody accepts Marx's concept of exploitation of labour!

Whatever is the view of other people, Ambedkar does not accept it! According to him, all arguments of Marx are wrong. Even the concept

of the 'exploitation of labour' is wrong. It does not exist at all. Labourers are not subjected to exploitation!

Well, then what do terms like 'economic exploitation' and 'safeguards from economic exploitation'?

Who knows? Does Ambedkar know anything about it?

3) The Buddha had already said all that Marx said!

Ambedkar first refuted one premise of Marx's theory and then rejected all other premises by declaring, 'the same is true about his other premises'. Again in the next paragraph he immediately changed his argument and said:

> "What remains of the Karl Marx is a residue of fire, small but still very important. The residue in my view consists of four items" (p.444).

He listed the four items as follows (p.444):

1. The function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to waste its time in explaining the origin of the world.

2. There is a conflict of interest between class and class.

3. Private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation.

4. It is necessary for the good of society that the sorrow be removed by the abolition of private property.

For Ambedkar these 4 items are "small but still very important". He, however, feels that the Buddha had already said all these points a long time ago much before Marx. Thus he began to cite examples from the Buddha's story to prove his argument.

1. The point that it is a waste of time to explain the origin of the world:

In fact, Marx did not say so. To prove that the Buddha had already said this point, Ambedkar cited one incident. Potthapada asked the Buddha the following questions: (1) Is the world not eternal? (2) Is the world finite? (3) Is the world infinite? (4) Is the soul the same as the body? (5) Is the soul one thing, and the body another? (6) Does one who has gained the truth live again after death? (7) Does he neither live again, nor not live again, after death? (p. 445).

The Buddha refused to express any opinion on these issues since they are not concerned with Dhamma, Knowledge or human conduct. For Ambedkar, expressing no opinion by the Buddha amounts to saying things much before Marx! Ambedkar thinks that Marx and the Buddha said the same thing since the Buddha dismissed these questions as irrelevant.

But what the Buddha talked was about 'nature'. Questions like, "Is this world eternal or not? What will happen after death?" are concerned with Nature.

Marx talked about issues concerning 'Society'. Marx says, "Philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways. The question, however, is to change it". As the existing society is based on exploitation, we have to change it, says Marx.

Ambedkar compared the Buddha's observations on nature and Marx's observations on society, concluded that both are the same and claims that the Buddha had already said a long time ago what Marx said. In this manner, his comparison and discussion are totally meaningless and useless.

2. The conflict between different classes:

Claiming that the Buddha had already made this point, Ambedkar cites an incident. The context is a conversation between the Buddha and Kosala king.

The Buddha said:

> "there is always strife going on between kings, between nobles, between Brahmins, between house holders, between mother and son, between son and father, between brother and sister, between sister and brother, between companion and companion..." (p.445).

In the view of Ambedkar, the Buddha's observations amount to speaking of class struggle.

Even those who do not at all know anything about classes will not be in such a pathetic condition as this!

When we speak of 'classes', we assume the existence of 'owner-labourers' relationship. We also assume the existence of exploitation of labour.

In the slave-owning society, slaves constitute one class while masters constitute another class.

In the feudal society, feudal (tenant) peasants constitute one class while the landlords constitute another class.

In the capitalist society, workers constitute one class while capitalists and landlords together constitute another class.

Classes are based on exploitation of labour! Class struggle and different interests are based on classes.

Based on these principles, we understand classes in any kind of society.

We find different groups within the same class and conflicts among those groups.

Within the class of owners, there are conflicts for getting a larger share while distributing the surplus value exploited from the working class in the form of rent, interest and profit.

There exist groups within the working class because of the distinction: manual labour and mental labour. The manual labourers live in more poverty than the mental labourers. Societies based on exploitation widen this gap further. Moreover, for every group within the labourers, job security is absent. Owing to this fact, competition among labourers begin and conflicts arise. But these conflicts are NOT for the sake of exploiting others' surplus value. These conflicts are merely for the sake of livelihood.

We will be able to understand classes, sections within the classes and the entire set of social relations only when we clearly know about the exploitation of labour.

Ambedkar's claim that 'the Buddha had already talked about the classes' has nothing to do with classes. If we properly understand classes, we can understand the nature of conflicts which the Buddha observed.

Conflict between kings: Different kings do not constitute different classes. All constitute the same class: The class of exploiters. Kings who conflict with each other constitute different groups within the same class. The source of income of each king is: taxes. A large part of these taxes goes for the royal luxuries. A King has his own lands and business as well. He receives rent and merchant profit. These are sources of personal income of the king. Different kings fight with each other to snatch away the others' kingdom. If a king is able to take away the others' kingdom, the victorious king gets all the taxes and rents from the new kingdom. This is a conflict between the groups within the class of exploiters.

Conflict between nobles: Nobles are not 'labourers'. Those who do not perform any labour become nobles and great beings. Therefore these nobles are obviously lazy fellows. Conflict among such fellows is simply for the sake of properties. These are also conflicts among the groups within the class of exploiters.

Conflict between Brahmins: This conflict is meant to share the earnings received from conducting sacrifices and rituals and without doing any labour. They do not constitute different classes; they are different groups within the class of exploiters.

Conflict between householders: If these householders are propertied people, there may arise conflicts relating to the boarder of their agricultural lands or house sites. If these householders are poor people, there may arise conflicts relating to the article which they lend or borrow from each other. These conflicts arise due to either 'riches' or 'poverty'.

Conflict between son and father, between mother and son and between brothers and sisters: There is 'male domination' in society. Husbands and their family members dominate wives; sons dominate mothers and brothers dominate sisters. The conflicts between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, which Ambedkar did not mention, also come under this category. These are the conflicts which arise due to the absence of equality in family relations. As 'equality' is absent in the very foundation of labour relations, its influence will be on the family relations in the form of male domination.

Conflicts between friends: This means either both or any one of the friends are behaving friendly with some selfish interest. When both friends are unselfish, conflicts do not arise.

Showing these kinds of conflicts, Ambedkar says that 'the Buddha recognized the existence of classes'. He says:

> "As to the Buddha's own attitude toward class conflict his doctrine of Ashtanga Marga recognises that class conflict exists and that it is the class conflict which is the cause of misery" (p. 445).

If the Buddha recognized the existence of classes what solution did he suggest? Only Ashtanga Marga; not struggle. He didn't argue that there should be no classes. If the Buddha did not suggest the right solution despite his being aware of it, does it not mean that he was in favour of the class of exploiters?

It is difficult to imagine to what stage this attempt of Ambedkar—an attempt to prove that the Buddha said everything much before Marx—will take him! With this, the second point is over.

3. "That private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation":

To prove that the Buddha had already talked about this point too, Ambedkar cited one incident.

The Buddha says to Potthapada:

"I have expounded, Potthapada, that sorrow and misery exist. I have expounded, what the origin of misery is ('avarice'). I have expounded what is the cessation of misery is ('absence of avarice'). I have expounded what is the method (Ashtanga Marga) by which one may reach the cessation of misery is" (p. 445).

Citing these words of the Buddha, Ambedkar says,

"That language is different but the meaning is the same. If for misery one reads exploitation the Buddha is not away from Marx" (p. 446).

Only the language is different but the essence of what both said is the same, argues Ambedkar! According to him, both the misery which the Buddha talks of and the exploitation of labour which Marx mentions are the same.

But according to Marx, the cause for the misery of working class is the class of owners.

According to the Buddha all people will have misery. Moreover the cause for their misery is their own avarice. The misery of the slave is due to his avarice! The misery of an untouchable is due to his avarice!

This is the meaning of the observation, the "Language is different and meaning is the same"!

Did the Buddha, who talked so much about wealth, tell anybody to reduce the wealth? 'If you reduce your wealth, your conflicts will decline and your sorrow diminishes. Give up some of your lands! Free your slaves!'—Did the Buddha advise wealthy persons like this.

'I will admit only those people who have little wealth and who have no avarice for wealth as my disciples'—Did the Buddha say so?

There is not a single incident of this sort. The Buddha simply recited sermons like 'Don't be avaricious' but he did not give the least trouble to wealthy people. With this, the third point ended.

4. "It is necessary for the good of society that the sorrow be removed by the abolition of private property":

According to Ambedkar, the Buddha had said long before Marx that private property should be abolished. Ambedkar said:

"On the fourth point no evidence is necessary. The rules of the Bhikshu Sangh will serve as the best testimony on the subject" (p. 446).

There is a rule that Bhikshus should not have more than 8 articles.

This rule, according to Ambedkar, implies that the Buddha argued that there should be no private property. Well, whom does that rule of using 8 articles apply to? It is so exclusively in the case of Bhikshus! How does this rule, which Bhikshus have to observe, apply to all people?

Did the Buddha advise kings, traders and the wealthy not to possess more property than those 8 articles? What did he say to all of them? He let kings rule their kingdoms; let traders carry on their trade and asked them to do their jobs more diligently. When Anathapindika asked whether he should give up his property, the Buddha became upset and discouraged him from doing so. One should be like a drop of water on the lotus and it is not bad to have property, said the Buddha. Well then, where did the Buddha say not to own property? To which wealthy fellow did he say so? If we explain this rule of possessing 8 articles to children aged about 5 or 6 years, they will say, "this is meant for sanyasis". If it is children aged about 7 or 8, they would even say, "the Buddha told Anathapindika not to give up business, didn't he?". These points are so simple that even children can think about them. But Ambedkar was not at all concerned about these points. He argued that the Buddha advised people not to have property and the rules for Bhikshus is the best evidence of the Buddha's stand. Then what about the Buddha's advice to Anathapindika? What sort of evidence is that? If the rule of 8 articles applies to all people then who will put alms in the bowls which all people carry?

While narrating the rules of Buddhist Sangh, Ambedkar said that 'upasakas' (lay followers) can have property. He also said that Buddhism provided great opportunities for shudras and women to acquire property, didn't he? But, here, he says Buddhism forbids private property.

How can one understand these strange bullying arguments? Moreover, even if we consider Bhikshus, they cannot have property individually but they can have any extent of common property. They can have common mansions, flower gardens, pleasure gardens and everything. Bhikshus can enjoy feasts with fish and meat until they say, "enough! Enough!' in the houses of wealthy people. They can live leisurely without doing work even for an hour in a day. Is all this not enjoying property? Doesn't all this mean possessing property? The rule of possessing only 8 articles is a superficial drama. The real essence is feasts and luxuries!

Claiming that the Buddha formulated very great rules concerning property, Ambedkar commented:

> "These rules are far more rigorous than are to be found in Communism in Russia" (p. 447).

Here it is irrelevant to talk about the rules of Communism in Russia.

If we want to compare the Buddha and Marx, we have to examine the words of these two persons but not what others say in their names.

Marx says, 'there shouldn't be private property based on exploitation. Does the Buddha also say the same thing? It is not so. the Buddha did not say so. His rule regarding property applies only for Bhikshus and not others. Since it is so, how can Ambedkar say that the Buddha's rules are more rigorous than those of Çommunism? How can he argue that the Buddha and Marx are identical in their views in respect of property? It is very difficult to understand as to what happened to the commonsense of Ambedkar.

What we have examined so far is this: Ambedkar first concluded that there are only 4 items which are important in Marx's theory. Later, he attempted through fables that the Buddha himself said those four 'items' much earlier than Marx. But his attempts weren't successful.

Ambedkar did not understand the fact that his attempts failed. He proceeded forward enthusiastically thinking that he was able to prove successfully his claim that the Buddha too talked of Communism like Marx.

While using terms like 'Socialism' and 'Communism' in respect of the Buddha, Ambedkar concluded that the Buddha too proposed Communism just as Marx did. Therefore, Ambedkar began his efforts to prove that 'both talked of Communism; but to achieve it the Buddha's path is superior to Marx's path'.

4) Whose path is better?

Now the entire discussion concerns the path or means to achieve Communism! First he showed the Buddha's path and then showed Marx's path.

Before we begin to examine whose path is better, we may mention one point. Following Marx's path, movements toward Communism began in two countries 60 years after Marx's theory began. Those movements might have faced defeat temporarily. They might have committed many mistakes. It is a different issue. In many regions of the world, at least the first steps began along the path of Marx toward changing society. But such attempts toward Communism did not take place even in one country through the Buddha's Ashtanga Marga even after 2,500 years. Is Ambedkar not aware of this fact? He is. But it is his overconfidence that we need not consider that fact and Communism is possible some time or other through Ashtanga Marga. He has no idea, 'when will it happen since it has not happened even after 2,500 years? He doesn't have any need to answer this question as he does not have questions at all.

His discussion concerning the 'means' or 'path' proceeds as follows.

(1) The Buddha's means to achieve 'Communism'

"The means of bringing about Communism which the Buddha propounded were quite definite. The means can be divided into three parts" (p. 447).

We have seen many times what those three parts are: purity, righteousness and virtue! Or Pancha Silas, Ashtanga Marga and Paramitas!

Ambedkar cited these three parts and emphasized that this is the path to achieve Communism. This means, Ambedkar too wants Communism! It is amazing!

Though we know all about Buddhism, we have to patiently look at it again for the sake of Communism. Even for the purpose of discussion, we have to reexamine it carefully.

Ambedkar said that we have to divide the Buddha's path into three parts, didn't he?

"Part one consisted in observing Pancha Silas" (p. 447).

Ambedkar summarized this path as follows:

Buddhism is a 'new gospel'. Its foundation is that 'the world is full of misery and unhappiness'. The recognition of this fact itself is the path that leads to emancipation.

After saying so, Ambedkar observed that there are two reasons for misery.

1. "A part of the misery and unhappiness of man was the result of his own misconduct" (p. 447).

According to this sermon, the cause for the misery of a slave is his misconduct. The cause for the misery of an untouchable too is his misconduct. Well then, why have untouchables accused poor Hindus so far? Well, at least, tender apologies to Hindus! Tell them, 'It is merely our misconduct which resulted in our misery and suffering. You have not done us any wrong'.

Further, untouchables should declare that reservations are not necessary. Because: when their own misconduct alone has resulted in their suffering, the solution lies in changing their 'conduct'. Hence how can they demand reservations? What is the use in looking for a solution when the entire fault lies in their conduct?

Ambedkar himself suggests following Pancha Silas first to change

misconduct. As a result, their sufferings will go. Hence untouchables should do the same thing, shouldn't they? Here Ambedkar said something new about Pancha Silas. It is better to practise it after reading it and combine it with the old conception.

1) "To abstain from destroying or causing destruction of any living thing"

(Well, these are good words! But why did the Buddha and his disciples eat meat and contributed to the destruction of living animals? Oh, they do it but we can't do it! Now the point is clear!).

2) "To abstain from stealing i.e. acquiring or keeping by fraud or violence, the property of another".

('The property of another'! Which means, property belongs to those whoever possesses it! Property possessed by a king belongs to the king! Property possessed by the minister belongs to the minister! Well, Ambedkar is arguing that the Buddha preached that there should be no private property, isn't he? If property possessed by an individual belongs to individuals only, why can't that property remain with them as private property?)

3) "To abstain always from telling untruth".

(Why did the Buddha speak untruth? For example, in the story of a girl named 'Prakriti'!)

4) "To abstain from lust".

(To abstain from all kinds of lust except from lust for: knowledge, gifts, feasts? That too, should people other than the Buddha abstain from it?)

5) "To abstain from consuming intoxicating drinks".

(How much distance one should maintain? At what distance should one sit in the respected company of wealthy fellows who take intoxicants?)

One should first observe these 5 principles in order to change his misconduct and become free from misery.

On the whole, there are 2 reasons for misery and unhappiness, aren't they? We have seen the first reason. The second reason is:

2. "A part of the misery and unhappiness in the world was according to the Buddha the result of man's inequity towards man".

The master treats his slave as an inferior person instead of as an equal. Hence a slave becomes unhappy and the master happy. The slave too treats

his master as a superior person instead of an equal. Because of this also slave becomes unhappy and master happy.

Why does one person not treat another as an equal? Those who are not equal in their life conditions cannot treat each other as equals. The person who is in a superior position gets happiness while the person who is in an inferior position gets unhappiness.

But according to the Buddha, any two persons must treat each other as equals even if they (their station in life conditions) are not equal.

Ambedkar found a beautiful path in the Buddha for the solution of this 'inequality' question.

> "For the removal of man's inequity towards man the Buddha prescribed the Noble Eight-Fold Path" (p. 447).

We have seen 2 reasons for misery and unhappiness, haven't we? The solution for the misery caused due to the first reason, namely, misconduct is Pancha Silas!

The solution for the misery caused due to the second reason, namely, inequity, is Ashtanga Marga!

Doesn't Ashtanga Marga solve the first misery and doesn't Pancha Silas solve the second misery? Nay, they don't solve! Do mustard seeds, instead of seeds of bishop's weed, cure indigestion? Each ailment should be treated with the appropriate medicine shouldn't it? This is like that too!

Okay, do you remember the elements of Ashtanga Marga? If you don't, let us recall them briefly: (1) Right views; (2) Right aims; (3) Right speech; (4) Right conduct; (5) Right livelihood; (6) Right perseverance in all the other seven. (Mentioning only 5 principles and proposing observance of 7 principles as the 6th principle!); (7) Right mindfulness; (8) Right contemplation. Ambedkar gave elaborate explanations for all these 8 elements. Those who want to eradicate their second kind of sorrow by means of Ashtanga Marga may see page 447 of volume 3.

> "The aim of the Noble Eight-Fold Path is to establish on earth the kingdom of righteousness, and thereby to banish sorrow and unhappiness from the face of the world" (p. 448).

To follow Ashtanga Marga one has to face many difficulties and hurdles.

> "The doctrine of Nibbana tells what are the difficulties in the way of realization of the Eight-Fold Path" (p. 448).

There are ten difficulties. They are: Delusion of self, Doubt and indecision, Dependence on the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, Bodily passions, Ill-will towards other individuals, Suppression of the desire for a future life with a material body, Desire for a future life in an immaterial world, Pride, self-righteousness and Ignorance. Even if we conquer all other difficulties the last one will remain unconquered. However, we can conquer these 10 Asavas (fetters or Hindrances or difficulties) by means of Nibbana.

The last part of the Buddha's new gospel is the doctrine of Paramitas. This doctrine tells us to inculcate the practice of ten virtues (p. 449). They are: (1) Panna (2) Sila (3) Nekkhana (4) Dana (5) Virya (6) Khanti (7)Succa (9) Aditthana (9) Metta and (10) Upekkha.

Ambedkar says that the Buddha's path makes all human beings become righteous people voluntarily by means of all these principles.

> "It is clear that the means adopted by the Buddha were to convert a man by changing his moral disposition to follow the path voluntarily" (p. 450).

Not only slaves but also their masters too change! Not only untouchables but all Hindus too change! In this manner, Communism emerges!

> "Such is the gospel the Buddha enunciated as a result of his enlightenment to end the sorrow and misery in the world" (p. 450).

So far, Ambedkar has tried to prove that this (the Buddha's path) alone is the best path to achieve Communism.

What more do we have to say about this attempt? If we want to comment there is only thing: Ambedkar perhaps knows very well about Communism which Ashtanga Marga brings about, but he doesn't know the ABCs of Communism which the class struggle brings about. This is the only comment one has to make!

What a strange experience to watch an educated person, who—though born in this modern world where the secret of exploitation of labour is exposed and though has acquired many degrees—did not allow a single ray of knowledge into his brain and lived with a 2,500 year-old orthodox soul!

So far, Ambedkar has shown us the Buddha's path to Communism, hasn't he? Now he will show Marx's path to Communism and would explain which is the better one.

(2) Marx's means to achieve Communism

On this issue, Ambedkar started his discussion as follows:

> "The means adopted by the Communists are equally clear, short and swift. They are (1) Violence and (2) Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Communists say that there are the only two means of establishing Communism. The first is violence. Nothing short of it will suffice to break up the existing system. The other is dictatorship of the proletariat. Nothing short of it will suffice to continue the new system. It is now clear what are the similarities and differences between the Buddha and Karl Marx. The differences are about the means. The end is common to both" (p. 450).

Though Ambedkar says that the end is common to both the Buddha and Marx, it is a meaningless observation. The end is not common to both. When the end is not common, there is no need of the discussion whether the means are the same or not. As Ambedkar too holds the same misconceptions of Marxism as many people do, we have to examine them.

Marxism is a theory that is antagonistic to the class of exploiters. Hence that class does not attempt to understand this theory. Though this is a theory which the labouring class likes, it is still in a stage where it has not reached the labouring class. That is why, the labouring population finds itself in a situation whereby it cannot answer the criticism of the opponents of Marxism. Moreover, many people within the labour class grope about in misconceptions like the opponents. For this reason, we must examine the questions of 'violence' and 'dictatorship' which Ambedkar has mentioned. To discuss Marxism, one has to rely on the writings of Marx and Engels not on what Communists say or do in Russia, China, India or some other country.

We should not totally equate a communist individual, a communist party or a communist country with Marx's theory. Individuals and organizations who claim to be followers of Marxism may commit many mistakes. They may function with many limitations. Those individuals themselves alone are responsible for the wrongs and defects and not the theory. We therefore should not cite individuals and sources other than the original writers.

Concerning Buddhism, Ambedkar argues elsewhere that the Buddha did not establish the Hinayana and Mahayana branches. Though these sects are considered to be Buddhist, he would recognize only the fundamental principles of the Buddha, says Ambedkar. Similarly, while evaluating a theory, one has to take into account the original writings of those who proposed the theory. We should follow the same method even in the case of Marxism.

Now let us examine the issues in Marxism which Ambedkar objects to.

On Violence: Ambedkar says that Marxism advocates violence as a means. On what basis does he say this? Has he shown anything from Marx's writings? He has not cited a single sentence. Though citing Marx from others' writing is not acceptable, he has not done even that.

We can discuss the matter if Ambedkar has cited any evidence from Marx. On what basis do we discuss the issue if he, without showing any evidence, argues that Marxism advocates violence as a means to establishing Communism? We, ourselves, have to search for the evidence of this point in Marx's writings. In Marx and Engels' work "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", there are some sentences where we find words like *forceful overthrow* and *violent overthrow*.

> "In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within the existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat" (p. 59 in Moscow edition, 1973).

> "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions" (p. 96).

Sentences of this sort may appear at many more places in the works of Marx and Engels. Mr. Ambedkar, do you call this 'violence'? Then listen! This is not violence. Moreover this is a struggle against violence. This is a revolt against violence. The real violence is the exploitation of labour which owners carry on.

Attempt to resist violence is not violence! It is the self-protection of the working class! If you describe struggle for self-protection as violence, it means that you are advising the working class not to struggle and rebel for their own emancipation and asking them to remain as slaves by pouring out labour to their masters as before.

If your tender heart cannot bear the working class struggle, there is another beautiful path before you! If you can make the class of owners abandon their property rights without any struggle, why will the working class wage struggle and revolt? Why does a struggle take place when there is no need for a struggle?

Will the class of owners give up its property rights? Will it begin to perform labour for its own maintenance? It has to till the land along with the labourers! It has to do work in factories and mines. It has to

run buses and trains. It has to sweep roads and clean sewage. Not simply one kind of work but whole range of jobs. It has to perform all kinds of jobs including the lowest manual labour just as the entire labouring population has been doing for several thousands of years. Further, the government of owners has to abandon all the arms which it has kept with it in order to suppress the Working Class which rebels! It has to abolish the police and the army!

Why will the Working Class wage struggles or revolts if the class of owners voluntarily agrees for such a change? Is the Working Class crazy?

Don't you know whether the armouries are under the control of workers or owners?

Don't you know under whose control and for whose protection the police and the military stand?

Don't you really know that the class of owners is the birthplace of violence? While there are a variety of strange and odd instruments of violence and bands of employees trained in violence are at the disposal of that class of owners, you are equating the struggle of the working class for its self-protection with violence. This shows how well you have understood the basis for violence!

What did the Buddha say about violence? He said, "war is wrong unless it is for truth and justice" (p. 442). Which means, such a war (for truth and justice) will be a 'right' war.

The war which the Working Class wages is also a 'right' war. If human beings are killed in such a war and if it amounts to violence, the Working Class is not responsible for that violence. It is the class of owners that is responsible. There won't be any violence if that class gives up its domination. Otherwise, violence is inevitable. Self-protection is inevitable, isn't it?

Ambedkar always forgets his own words. Otherwise he would have remembered the fact that he emotionally preached violence for self-protection for the untouchables. That context was this: Ambedkar was a member in the beginning in the Anti-Untouchability League which Gandhi started in 1932. While writing a letter to Thakkar, the secretary of the League, Ambedkar argued that there should be an army of workers to wage struggles for the protection of untouchables' rights, that the programme of struggle involves 'social disturbance' and 'even bloodshed' and that no other programme will be effective.

Would you like to see it in Ambedkar's own words?

> "I think the first thing that the League should undertake is a campaign all over India to secure to the Depressed Classes the enjoyment of their civic rights such as taking water from the village wells, entry into village schools, admission to the village chawdi, the use of public conveyance, etc. Such a programme if carried into villages will bring about the necessary social revolution in the Hindu society, without which it will never be possible for the Depressed Classes to get equal social status... First of all there will be **riots** between the Depressed Classes and the caste Hindus which will result in **breaking heads**... the League will have to have an army of workers in the rural parts, who will encourage the Depressed Classes to fight for their rights... It is true that this programme involves **social disturbance** and **even bloodshed**. But I do not think that it can be avoided. I know the alternative policy of adopting the line of least resistance. I am convinced that it will be ineffective in the matter of uprooting Untouchability... you must create a **crisis** by **direct action**" (Vol. 9, pp: 135-36, emphases added).

Thus Ambedkar gave suggestions throughout his very long letter. What sort of suggestions? That only a direct action organized by the army of workers involving even bloodshed will uproot Untouchability.

Further, see other examples which Ambedkar cited and where he suggested means to fight out any injustice anywhere! (Vol. 5, p. 375).

This is an occasion when Ambedkar criticised Gandhi. A clause in the constitution of Harijan Sevak Sangh which Gandhi established reads as follows:

> "That no compulsion is to be used for securing rights, but that peaceful persuasion is to be adopted as the *only* means" (Vol.5, p. 375).

While criticising Gandhi for this clause, Ambedkar's argument defending the use of force ('even bloodshed') proceeded with great enthusiasm. After citing the clause, Ambedkar says:

> "This is a basic principle of the Sangh. It has struck me as strange suggestion—Why has the Sangh limited itself to peaceful persuasion of the caste Hindus as the one and the only means of removing Untouchability?" (Vol. 5, p. 375).

In this manner he made a long argument and finally concluded that injustice should be 'resisted' and 'challenged' 'by power' (use of force).

> "If justice is to be abolished it must be resisted and when injustice proceeds from collective power, whether in the form of imperialism or class domination, it must be challenged by power. A class entrenched behind its established power can never be dislodged unless power is raised

against it. That is the only way of stopping the exploitation of the weak by strong" (Vol. 5, p. 375).

He, thus, said 'this is the only way', didn't he? Then how can resistance to injustice be 'violence' and not revolt or resistance?

"I have mentioned only two of the many obstacles which the League will have to overcome if this campaign of civic rights is to be successful and the League will have to have an army of workers in the rural parts who will encourage the Depressed Classes to fight for their rights and who will help them in any legal proceedings arising therefrom to a successful issue. It is true that this programme involves **social disturbances** and **violent scuffle**. But I do not think that it can be avoided" (Vol. 5, p. 368, emphases added).

"The salvation of the Depressed Classes will come only when the Caste Hindu is made to think and is **forced** to feel that he must alter his ways" (Vol. 5, p. 368, emphasis added).

Why have these arguments of Ambedkar, namely, "violent scuffle", "forced", "crisis" and "direct action" turned upside down by the time he discussed Marx's theory?

Have 'violence' and 'use of force'—which were the best means to fight against Untouchability—become 'mean' means to fight against 'exploitation of labour'? What name would be more appropriate to this kind of argument?

If we discuss this issue in greater detail, we will find that these revolts and use of force do not at all function effectively in the case of Untouchability as they function in the case of exploitation of labour.

To put an end to the exploitation of labour, it is the working class that has to change. It is enough if it acquires new knowledge that the exploitative property rights should be abolished. Then the problem will be solved. But this is not the case with the question of 'Untouchability'. Here it is not untouchables who have to change but the Hindus. Unless Hindus realize that 'observance of Untouchability is wrong' and change themselves, the revolts of untouchables will not be effective.

Untouchables may acquire the right to use common wells. But what can untouchables do if Hindus stop coming to those wells? With what right can the untouchables compel Hindus to come to the well? What can untouchables do if the Hindu children don't attend the same schools to which the children of untouchables attend? If Hindus don't visit the same temples where untouchables enter? If Hindus don't employ untouchables as domestic workers? With what right can the untouchables fight against a Hindu to stop him from taking bath at home after he has touched an

untouchable? This is not something untouchables can achieve by using force against the Hindus. The solution lies in the hands of Hindus and not untouchables.

The nature of problems like Untouchability and caste distinctions is such that it is not possible to eradicate them unless their practitioners change. Others' rights do not matter here.

The fact that practice of Untouchability has diminished today implies that it is because of the culturally refined ideas of Hindus and not because the untouchables have stopped the Hindus from its practice.

Culturally refined ideas always arise due to the fight against the conditions that are opposed to the ideas. However, culturally refined ideas among the practitioners crop up because the sufferers of Untouchability fought against Untouchability in some way or the other. This is true. But why did the sufferers of Untouchability acquire ideas and struggle against Untouchability? Because of their suffering. This reason was there even in the remote past as well. In addition to the suffering, changes and struggles in the sphere of production relations—which form the basis of culture—influence the sphere of culture. Such changes and struggles prompt Dalits to fight against Untouchability. They also influence Hindus who practice Untouchability.

Ambedkar suggested the use of force in the case of Untouchability where it is not possible to eradicate the evil practice by means of force. Whereas he is arguing that 'force' does not apply in respect to the 'exploitation of labour'. He said that people have to resist with collective power in the form of class domination, didn't he? Then how could he say that Marxism advocates the path of violence and it is not a good path? Is it not surprising?

If we begin to be surprised by what Ambedkar says, then we will need eternity. We are constantly surprised, not just on one or two occasions. How long can we be surprised when we have to be surprised at every page?

It is wrong if others say what he said! Moreover, today he won't say what he said yesterday! He won't say the same tomorrow what he has said today! His arguments change without a change in the contents! There isn't any reason why his arguments change. He changes them as per his convenience! This is the only principle he seems to follow!

Well, let us now discuss the second point in Marxism which is objectionable to Ambedkar.

Dictatorship of the proletariat:

Ambedkar argues that Marx suggested the path of dictatorship instead of democracy whereas the Buddha preached the path of democracy and hence the Buddha's path is the better one!

We will discuss Marx's meaning of dictatorship later. What is the basis for the claim that the Buddha proposed Democracy? Ambedkar cites some examples in support of his claim.

> 1) "As to Dictatorship the Buddha would have none of it. He was born a democrat and he died a democrat. At the time he lived there were 14 monarchical states and 4 republics. He belonged to the Sakyas and the Sakya's kingdom was a republic" (p. 451).

All the countries which Ambedkar glorified as 'republics' were based on the exploitation of slaves. The class that performs labour and a class that exploits labour existed in those republics. The slaves did not have any rights. This is the best democracy which Ambedkar loved! On many occasions Ambedkar said that there is no democracy in India where we have untouchables and that whatever exists in the name of democracy is not democracy for untouchables. Then how could a society with slaves that existed 2,500 years ago be a democratic society? Look, once again we are surprised here!

2) Another example which Ambedkar cited to claim that the Buddha was a democrat: that the Buddha used to wear 'robes made of rags' along with all other Bhikshus! The reason for wearing the robes made of rags was to prevent aristocratic classes joining the Sangh, says Ambedkar. This means, persons joined the Buddha's Sangh not because they liked the Dhamma (path). They joined only if they were not afraid to wear robes made of rags! They wouldn't join if they had the fear of being dressed in rags!

If the Buddha didn't like to admit aristocrats, would it not have been enough if he had laid a condition that he wouldn't admit the rich? Is wearing 'robes made of rags' a solution?

Anyway the Buddha did not lay down the rule that members should not have 'money', did he? Then how could possession of money or aristocracy be wrong? What is the reference to money in order to admit a person into Sangh? However small an issue Ambedkar raises, it has no less than a hundred blunders!

While all Bhikshus were wearing these 'robes made of rags', Jeevika, a royal physician "prevailed upon the Buddha to accept a robe which made of a whole cloth. The Buddha at once altered the rule and extended it

to all the monks" (p. 452). The Buddha was a "thorough egalitarian" according to Ambedkar! It seems the Buddha liked the robe made of a whole cloth. As he didn't want to remove that robe, he permitted Bhikshus too to wear such robes. Oh, what a clever guy the Buddha was!

This democracy of 'robes' is wonderful; but wouldn't there be a problem of aristocrats joining the Sangh? The past rule of robes made of rags was meant to prevent such aristocrats' admission, wasn't it? If you remove that rule, how will you solve the problem of aristocrats joining the Sangh? Is it not once again surprising to note that Ambedkar cited this story without this question? It is a pity that Ambedkar landed into unwarranted trouble thinking that he could prove the Buddha's democracy by this fable of the robes!

> 3) "Once the Buddha's mother Mahaprajapati Gotami who had joined the Bhikkhuni Sangh heard that "the Buddha had got a chill...".

Having heard about it, she "at once started preparing a scarf for him". (This mother is perhaps a kind of person, to use a Telugu saying, who digs a well while the house is burning! Making a scarf after he has a cold!)

> "After having completed it she took to the Buddha and asked him to wear it. But he refused to accept it saying that if it is a gift it must be a gift to the whole Sangh and not to an individual member of the Sangh. She pleaded and pleaded but he refused to yield" (p.452).

This means, the Buddha was a democrat! This is the third example.

But he could have taken the scarf for the Sangh and everyone—whoever needs it—could have used it, couldn't they? Now the Buddha could use it since he had a cold. Later, after washing it clean, others could use it. Is there any dearth of catching a cold? Whoever has a nose will get a cold, won't they? Using a scarf by the Sangh means each member has to use it individually, doesn't it? All the members of the Sangh can't tie the same scarf round their heads at a time, do they?

The Buddha could have told his mother clearly that he would accept it if she gives it to the Sangh and he wouldn't take it if it were meant only for him.

Did she say that she wouldn't give it if it were for the Sangh?

Ambedkar's Buddha appears to be a brainless guy. His mother too seems like him. She could have said, 'well, take it for the use of the Sangh! Whoever wants it can use it!' It didn't occur to her. How could it occur to her when it did not occur to an enlightened person, philosopher and democrat like the Buddha? Anyway, the Buddha did not take the scarf. He would have accepted it in the name of the Sangh if it were land or mansion. He didn't accept it because it was merely a scarf.

These fables of 'democracy of robes' and 'democracy of scarf' are the bases of Ambedkar's claim that the Buddha was a great democrat and his path is the best of all paths. How amazing this is? Can a theory become a 'democratic' theory just because of such stories?

Ambedkar has a lot of glamour for the term 'democracy'. He is not bothered even if there are slaves in that democracy. It is needless to talk of the term 'parliamentary democracy'—even if classes, exploitation of labour and everything is in tact.

A society based on exploitation can continue its relations of exploitation in the name of 'democracy'. Such a democracy exists as democracy between owners but not between owners and labourers. Hence the terms 'democracy' and 'republic' are meaningless in the context of 'exploitation'. These are simply good names.

It is wrong to defend or oppose anything by the name alone. Ambedkar was concerned merely with the names and not concerned with the 'essence' of the names. Hence, by looking at the names such as Sakya republic, Vishali republic, Magadha republic and so on and calls the rule of those kings 'democracies'. Similarly, looking at Marx's 'dictatorship', he exhibits serious opposition to it.

Yes, what Marx says is 'dictatorship'. But he called it 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. He described that dictatorship as follows:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat* (Critique of the Gotha Programme, p. 26. Moscow edition, 1971, emphasis in the original).

The Commune could not found a new form of class government. In destroying the existing conditions of oppression by transferring all the means of labour to the productive labourer, and thereby compelling every able-bodied individual to work for a living, the only base for class rule and oppression would be removed. But before such a change could be effected a proletarian dictatorship would become necessary (Marx. In 'Marx and Engels: Collected Works", vol. 11, pp: 633-34. Moscow edition, 1986).

Why is this proletarian dictatorship necessary, as per Marx's explanation? This is not a dictatorship that serves the class of owners in order to perpetuate exploitation; but exactly opposed to it. This is a dictatorship useful for the working class to remove exploitation.

When the working class can take the 'state power' through its struggle, society will still be in the old conditions. That is in the same conditions of 'owner-worker relations'. The working class has to change such a society into a 'new' society. Revolutionary restrictions will be imposed on the existing labour relations. Abolition of property rights over land and capital will begin in a stage-wise manner. Every individual has to perform labour compulsorily. Not only mental labour but also the lowest manual labour in turn as duties. Wage or salary that a person gets in return to the 'labour' is the income of that person. This means, no body should have the right to receive income under the labels of rent, interest and profit without doing any labour. 'Religion' should be an individual affair. No one should have the right to propagate religion openly, to form religious organisations and to live as religious preachers without doing labour. In this manner, the working class government has to abolish all the irrational aspects that continued in exploitative societies. To achieve all this the State has to impose many revolutionary restrictions.

Imposition of restrictions, namely, 'land under the possession of the landlord no longer belongs to him', capitals are not properties of capitalists and every individual must perform labour and live on their own labour—imply abolition of rights of the past ages. This abolition is a dictatorship against the propertied class. Whether we change its name in any manner and whether we call it 'proletarian democracy', it is dictatorship against another class if the restrictions have to remain. How is it possible to abolish the exploitative property rights in the absence of this dictatorship and these restrictions?

All the restrictions necessary to establish 'equality' are not confined to the class of exploiters only. Certain kinds of restrictions will necessarily be imposed on all people. For example, if the population engaged only in mental labour has to do manual labour, all the relevant restrictions should exist. Similarly, there should be certain restrictions in order to change division of labour between men and women. Marx had said that Communists should undertake revolutionary transformation of 'all existing social conditions'.

People belonging to all classes—who have been living for ages amidst relations of exploitation and corresponding ideology—have to 'transform' into relations of equality and ideas of equality. Relations of inequality must shatter into pieces and new relations have to be woven in all spheres of life. All this constitutes a struggle against the 'freedom' which the class of owners alone enjoyed. This is a revolt wherever there is domination. Hence, no other name except 'revolutionary dictatorship' applies. However, this dictatorship is not something that remains eternally. This is something

necessary until we change relations of exploitation into relations of equality. The period of revolutionary dictatorship constitutes only the period of transition. When there is no need of this stage, there won't exist class distinctions. When there are no class distinctions at all, class dictatorships too won't find a place.

Ambedkar did not pay attention to any of these explanations of Marx. In his view, the word 'dictatorship, itself is wrong! The dictatorship of the proletariat appears to be wrong to any one who does not keep in view the exploitation of labour.

Ambedkar does not like any of the restrictions which this kind of dictatorship imposes on the propertied class. According to him, all people will change by means of Buddhism without the need of any dictatorship.

What more do we need than this if such a change is possible? Can't we establish in a very short time the classless society without shedding a single drop of blood by any class, and to use a Telugu expressions, without losing a single hair on the head and without spoiling the clothes worn, if the class of exploiters gives up its property rights irrespective of the existence of restrictions and realises the responsibility of performing labour? Will this happen by means of the Buddha's path?

Opposing the proletariat dictatorship, Ambedkar's criticism proceeds as follows:

> "Take dictatorship. The end of Dictatorship is to make the Revolution a permanent revolution. This is a valuable end. But can the Communists say that in achieving this end they have not destroyed other valuable ends?" (p. 452).

> "They have destroyed private property...How many people have they killed for achieving their end. Has human life no value? Could they not have taken property without taking the life of the owner?" (p. 452).

Where did these 'killings' take place? When? On what occasion? He has not given a single piece of evidence; except saying 'they killed! They killed!'

If at all this had happened anywhere, it might have happened in a war. Or it might have happened when the owners tried to kill labourers while opposing their movement. How can we judge what is good and what is bad unless we know what happened and in what context it happened?

'Could they not have taken property without taking the life of the owner?', asks Ambedkar.

Yes, they could. In fact, it is wholly an ideal and desirable to do

so. But it will be possible only when the owner too cooperates! That is, when the owner voluntarily gives up his property in his possession and the attitude of an owner! If it so happens he will be very secure, or to use a Telugu figurative expression, 'even the flower which the owner wears on the head will not fade'. But no owner behaves so sensibly. "The entire land is mine", says he, though the land does not belong to any one person. "The entire capital is mine", says he, though the capital belongs to workers! "Why should I work when I possess property", he says. This conflict may go to any extent. If it leads to a struggle and killings, will that be the workers' crime? Will that be the workers' responsibility?

Are only owners dying in these struggles? Is nothing happening to the workers? Why do workers also take the risk of their lives? It is because there is a need for it!

'Can't they take property without killing the owner', asks Ambedkar with a great human heart. Can't we ask him the same question? What if we ask him, 'Can't untouchables use common amenities without breaking the heads of Hindus?' Why did Ambedkar advocate 'even bloodshed' with reference to Hindus? Ambedkar too did not think that only a drop of blood would delicately be shed and then stop shedding, did he? He himself said that heads may break, didn't he? Then can't the untouchables conduct 'movements' without breaking anybody's head? Why did Ambedkar himself say that there was no other way? Then how is he able to ask Communists, 'can't you take property without killing the owner'?

Untouchables as well as Communists know that killing is not ideal or desirable and they should not resort to that method. Such a thing happens only when the situation is unavoidable.

We have seen several dozen times at every point how Ambedkar's method works? It is right if he says something! It is wrong when others say the same thing! This is his principle! This alone is the guiding principle of all his investigations.

Do you remember what this democrat—who dismisses dictatorship and use of force—said in the context when he explained how to reform the Hindu religion? Let us go to the essay *Annihilation of Caste*. There he suggested many restrictions: that there should be only one standard text for the Hindu religion, that all Hindu religious texts like Vedas, Shastras and Puranas be abolished, that the propagation of anything from those texts be considered a crime and punished and so on. Will all these measures not amount to 'dictatorship over those who believe those texts as the Holy Scriptures? Will punishing such people not amount to the use of force?

If banning the freedom to propagate the Hindu religious texts is not dictatorship, how can the ban on exploitative rights be dictatorship?

According to Ambedkar, none of the bans and punishments that he suggested amount to dictatorship or illegitimacy. Whatever Marx said that alone is dictatorship and illegal!

Following this sort of attitude, Ambedkar concluded Marx's path as 'use of force'. Such a path, Ambedkar said, will not last longer though succeed temporarily and hence the Buddha's path will last long.

Here also Ambedkar began to narrate a fable in order to prove the difference between the 'rule by righteousness' and 'rule by force'. This is a story of righteousness which Ambedkar used as a weapon to defeat Marxism. Readers have to examine this very important 'scientific' discussion with great care.

Rule by Celestial Wheel:

According to Ambedkar, the Buddha narrated this story to Bhikshus (pp: 453-58). 'Long long ago, there was a Sovereign overlord named Strongtyre. He lived in supremacy over this earth to its ocean bounds, having conquered it'. He was such a conqueror. He conquered the earth 'not by the sword but by righteousness', says the Buddha.

The Buddha interprets that this emperor conquered the earth not by sword but by righteousness! "Yes, this is true", Ambedkar sings in chorus! Both the Buddha and Ambedkar are describing the emperor as a great righteous ruler and protector of people.

The Buddha's surrender to the emperor is indescribable! It is needless to talk about Ambedkar's surrender. The sight of a 'king' is enough! Abject submission! Total surrender!

The emperor had a 'celestial wheel'. He ruled people righteously for thousands of years. One day the Celestial wheel sunk a little and slipped down from its place. The emperor called his son immediately and told him, 'I have had my full of human pleasures. It is time to seek after divine joys. Take charge of this earth bounded by the ocean. I shall shave my hair and beard and become a sanyasi.' Saying thus the emperor 'went forth from home into a homeless state'.

On the seventh day after the emperor left, the Celestial Wheel disappeared. The son went and told his father about it. The father said, 'Don't worry! The Celestial Wheel is not a parental heritage' (The real parental heritage includes land and slaves only. What if one gets or does not get that stupid Celestial Wheel!)

The father gave great sermons to his son: 'Follow the Aryan duty! The Celestial Wheel remains where there is righteousness! Worship truth and righteousness! Righteousness is your master! Provide protection for the army, vassals, your own folk, Brahmins, people! Give money to the poor! Renounces the carelessness arising from intoxication of the senses!

This emperor does not use the sword but righteousness, isn't it? Then why does he have an army with him? This army also wages wars! Other kings become his vassals! They pay tribute! The king's own folk have special luxuries! Brahmins have special protection! This is the rule by righteousness which Ambedkar liked a lot!

The Celestial Wheel reappeared when the son went home and conducted 'puja' (worship) on the full moon day. If the Wheel appears, then the king will become a bigger king, a monarch and even a sovereign of the world. The king took in his left hand a pitcher and with his right hand sprinkled water over the Celestial Wheel saying: 'Roll onward, O Lord Wheel! (The son, it seems, is not happy with the kingdoms which his father gave him! He is asking the Wheel to conquer ("overcome") more).

The Celestial Wheel rolled onwards towards the region of the East and after it the king and his fourfold army moved. (Ambedkar swears that this is righteousness and not use of force!). All the kings from that region came to the emperor and obeyed his supremacy, "O mighty king! O mighty king! All is yours!'.

Then his sovereign king gave those vassals sermons: 'don't kill living beings! Don't speak lies. Don't drink maddening drink. Don't steal!' (I will do all these crimes and steal all kingdoms. You don't do these things!)

Then the Celestial Wheel turned southwards. Here also the same thing happened. Many vassals surrendered. They were also given sermons.

The Celestial Wheel turned to all directions. "The Celestial Wheel had gone forth conquering over the whole earth to its ocean boundary and returned to the royal city and stood" (p. 456). (Recall, it is Ambedkar's strange interpretation that the Buddha—who narrated these stories of 'conquering over the whole earth'—had opposed 'private property'!)

In this way, seven emperors ruled in a righteous path. But one emperor, disregarding Aryan duty, began to rule as he wished. He stopped giving money to the destitutes.

The Celestial Wheel disappeared again. Poverty became widespread. A poor person committed theft. The king gave him money. All the poor people thought this was a nice way and began to commit theft. But the king this time had the thieves' heads cut off. Then the thieves turned into robbers and began to kill people.

Immoral courses of action and promiscuity increased. There began a lack of religious piety to holy men. (This is a good trend, isn't it?)

The Buddha continues to narrate what sort of abnormalities take place in such a situation. The life span of humans will come to ten years. Maidens of five years will be of a marriageable age. Among such humans knowledge of tastes disappear. (Why will it not disappear when there is nothing to eat?) Ten moral courses of conduct will altogether disappear and the ten immoral courses of action will flourish excessively.

The story goes on like this till the end.

The emperors were able to conquer many kingdoms when they followed the Aryan duty. Then the world conducted itself in a righteous manner. But the world filled with vices because one emperor abandoned his Aryan duty! This is the essence! This is a story that glorifies emperors, Brahmins and Aryan duty!

The Buddha narrates this story glorifying Aryan duty!

Ambedkar cited this story merely to show that a rule by righteousness is very great but the world will be full of vices if it follows Marx's concept of dictatorship.

Ambedkar did not at all feel ashamed to tell us that emperors— who invaded all parts of the earth with a fourfold army—ruled by righteousness and not the sword. He did not at least feel ashamed to glorify Brahmins and Aryan duty.

More on 'Proletarian Dictatorship':

Ambedkar's discussion is not yet over. It goes on in many ways. One of his arguments is as follows:

> "The Communists themselves admit that their theory of the State as a permanent dictatorship is a weakness in their political philosophy... Dictatorship for a short period may be good and a welcome thing even for making Democracy safe. Why should not Dictatorship liquidate itself after it has done its work, after it has removed all the obstacles and boulders in the way of democracy and has made the path of Democracy safe" (p. 459).

> "...no argument for permanent Dictatorship. Permanent Dictatorship has paid no attention to spiritual values and does not seem to intend to" (pp: 461-62).

'The Communists admit that permanent dictatorship is a weakness in their theory', says Ambedkar! This means, Ambedkar does not know that proletariat dictatorship is not permanent, that it is temporary and that

it represents a 'transition period'! This also means that he entered the arena of theoretical discussion of Marxism without knowing what Marx wrote and without mentioning those Communists who admitted "the weakness in their political philosophy". Here we should be surprised once again.

The entire discussion of Marxism by Ambedkar is of the same sort. Nowhere did he discuss it by citing Marx's words and knowing properly what Marx has said. His entire knowledge concerning Marxism is 'hearsay' knowledge.

He agreed that Dictatorship for a short period may be good. He said it is necessary for making democracy safe. Marx too observed that it is only for a transition period and not permanently. Then why should Ambedkar have hatred for Marx's theory? Aren't his fables and fabricated stories wholly useless?

Even if some one does not know what Marx talked about 'dictatorship', he can understand it properly if he thinks even a bit. Even those who have heard about Marxism in a half-baked manner must have heard terms like 'classless society', 'abolition of classes' and the 'communist society'. If class distinctions were absent how could there be working class and its dictatorship? Against which class will this dictatorship? For whom does the theory of Communism propose permanent dictatorship? If one thinks this much, he can easily understand that proletariat dictatorship is not a permanent phenomenon and merely a temporary one.

But Ambedkar could not understand this small point. One can understand matters only if he makes an attempt to understand them. Ambedkar doesn't like at all to think in a positive manner. What he wants is to look for some fault or the other in Marxism even if there is no basis for it. All his energies and intellect are meant for that.

His hatred for Marxism is not yet over. It went on in many ways.

> "They (Communists) take shelter under the plea that the State will ultimately wither away. There are two questions which they have to answer. When will it wither away? What will take the place of the State when it withers away?... The Communists have given no answer... Will it be succeeded by Anarchy? If so the building up of the Communist State is an useless effort. If it cannot be sustained except by force and if it results in anarchy when the force holding it together is withdrawn what good is the Communist State" (pp: 459-60).

This is how his argument proceeds.

If one understands the concept of classes and their conflicting interests, then it will also be clear what a State is and why it withers away.

If any one has not understood the concept of the withering away of the State, it means he has not understood the concepts of 'exploitation of labour' and 'classes'.

If he knows about 'exploitation', he will also know about 'State rule'. State is not a natural need of the society. It did not exist for a long time in the early stages of society. Only since the beginning of exploitation and the distinction of slaves and masters, this new phenomenon became necessary for the masters. They needed some arrangements and rules in order to occupy the entire land as their property and to make slaves labour for them. The same started the State rule. It was the rule of the Masters over the slaves. As exploitation of labour is still in existence, the present day State-rule too is meant for the interests of the class of owners.

When classes exist, State rule will be Class state rule. Even if it has the label 'democracy', it cannot be a rule that gives equality to both the classes.

In such a society, when exploitative property rights are abolished, when all persons begin to do labour and when distinctions gradually vanish, conflict will disappear. Dictatorship of any class will vanish Which means, there will be no need of any aspect connected with State rule. If elimination of exploitation takes place, withering away of State too takes place. Now, we can give answers to Ambedkar's questions.

(1) When will the State whither away?

Answer: Whenever its need disappears! Whenever class distinctions disappear! 'When this will happen' does not depend on the number of years. It depends on the changes that take place in the labour relations. The working class has to acquire new ideas for its liberation. It has to change the relations of inequality through its struggle. The State will wither away as soon as this transformation takes place.

(2) What will come in the place of State when it withers away? Anarchy?

Ans: What will come in the place of 'ill-health' when ill health disappears? 'Good-health' comes into its position. It is the same case here also.

'Will anarchy appear when the State withers away?' This question assumes that anarchy is something bad and the State is very good! Both State and Anarchy arise from the condition of 'class distinctions'. When classes vanish, these two will also vanish.

When there is no need of a State, it will not be an anarchic situation. It is not anarchy if there is a situation where in you don't find a policeman

with a cane in his hand or a ruffian whose occupation is violence. It will be a situation that does not pollute the atmosphere of comfort and peace.

For the survival of human beings production and distribution (not sales) alone are natural needs. Human kind will not survive if these processes cease. Hence they are natural needs. State rule is not such a need. If it ceases to exist, it means that an unnatural phenomenon, which is not needed for the society, has ceased.

When the State rule withers away, there emerges a new system which is different from the class rule, which will have a classless character and which can organise labour relations. It does not amount to 'state rule' and further it does not at all amount to anarchy. It amounts to 'organising society'. It will assume a form suitable to that society.

When we speak of the disappearance of classes it sounds simply an imaginary ideal (Utopia). People will not have the confidence that this utopia is logical. Whatever is prevalent at a given point of time appears to be an eternal fact. Since class distinctions and State rule have been in existence for many thousands of years, these appear more eternal truths. But no phenomenon can be eternal just because it has been in existence for a long time. Only those phenomena are eternal whose absence makes human life impossible. Every phenomenon that is prevalent is not eternal. State rule came into existence only for the sake of class exploitation and it is not a natural need.

But according to Ambedkar, the entire State machinery is an eternal truth. It is above classes. That is, unconnected with classes. An emperor rules all people equally! Capitalistic parliaments, their democracies and everything is above classes. If State rule is absent anarchy prevails. Peace and security deteriorate in the absence of a policeman who uses a cane or a soldier who exhibits his war related valour. If it is by means of Marxism, State rule withers away and anarchy prevails. If it is by means of the Buddha's path, the State rule remains eternally and there will be no anarchy. This is what Ambedkar means.

Permanence of State power in the Buddha's path means that there will be an eternal need for the State rule. This means, distinctions, conflicts and oppression among men will always exist. This also means that human relations without them (distinctions, conflicts, oppression etc) will not emerge! Such a path is the best one! Very good! This goodness is excellent! This excellence is wonderful!

5) According to Ambedkar, Communism is a 'Pig Philosophy'!

Ambedkar repeatedly says that the Buddha's Ashtanga Marga is the superior path compared to the struggle path of Marx. Ashtanga Marga transforms human beings from the bottom of the heart without any use of force, says Ambedkar.

He describes the Buddha's path as follows:

> "The Buddha's method was different. His method was to change the mind of man: to alter his disposition: so that whatever man does, he does it voluntarily without the use of force or compulsion. His main means to alter the disposition of men was his Dhamma and the constant preaching of his Dhamma. The Buddha's way was not to force people to do what they did not like to do although it was good for them. His way was to alter the disposition of men so that they would do voluntarily what they would not otherwise do" (p. 461).

Well, this is wonderful; but are there any incidents whereby wealthy persons changed by means of the Buddha's path? Were there kings who changed old thoughts, who developed cultural refinement and 'abandoned' their kingdoms by means of the Buddha's preaching of Dhamma? Were there any traders who decreased their wealth? Were there masters who abandoned their slaves? There is not even a single incident of this sort in the Buddha's history. Such a change did not take place in the heart of a single rich person.

As the Buddha's path does not compel anyone, it won't compel the rich persons either. It won't abolish their rights. It won't trouble them. There is nothing to change: Master remains a master! Slave remains a slave! Servitude and domination as before! Is the Buddha necessary to tell us this element of truth? Is the slave master not enough?

Anyway there is no mechanism of changing social conditions by means of the Buddha's path. Will it at least change a few wealthy persons? No, it won't! This means, in this path there is neither social reform nor individual reform. Both are untrue.

These two are present in Marx's path. According to Marx's theory, ideas and behaviour of an individual depend on and are interconnected with the class situations. The beginning of changes toward 'equality' imply the beginning of 'new ideas'. The process of unifying classes changes old ideas of the individuals and also the old conditions in society. This means, by means of Marx's path changes in society as well as individual take place.

Individual reform that changes a few individuals will not bring about class reform. The class reform that changes the entire society will bring about individual reform as well. This is the difference between the Buddha's path and Marx's path!

Ambedkar is not bothered about all this. As there is no term, namely, 'dictatorship' in the Buddha's path, Ambedkar describes it many a time as the best!

Well, won't the Buddha's path be effective in the case of Untouchability?

Okay, Ambedkar glorified the Buddha's method as something that changes the mind of man and alters his disposition, didn't he?

He also says that human beings change if we simply teach them without compulsion and hence the Buddha's path is the best for this reason. But how should the readers respond when they come to know that Ambedkar severely opposed elsewhere the path of reforming individuals and also said that such a reform would not do good to the class? Further Gandhi, while discussing the problem of Untouchability suggested not to use force against the Hindus but try peaceful methods, didn't he? Then why did Ambedkar reject Gandhi's suggestion?

At that time Ambedkar's arguments against Gandhi proceeded as follows:

> "The silent infiltration of rational ideas among the ignorant mass of Caste Hindus cannot, I am sure, work for the salvation of the Depressed Classes. First of all the Caste Hindu like all human beings follow his customary conduct in observing Untouchability towards the Depressed Classes. Ordinarily, people do not give up their customary mode of behaviour because somebody is preaching against it. The salvation of the Depressed Classes will come only when the caste Hindu is made to think and is forced to feel that he must alter his ways....The great defect in the policy of least resistance and silent infiltration of rational ideas lies in this that they do not 'compel' for they do not produce crisis" (Vol. 5, pp: 368-69).

Further, see Ambedkar's argument which he made in his letter to Thakkar:

> "In my opinion, there is also another method of approach to this problem. It starts with the hypothesis that the fate of the individual is governed by his environment and the circumstances he is obliged to live under, and if an individual is suffering from want and misery it is because his environment is not propitious. I have no doubt that of the two views the latter is the more correct, the former may raise a few stray individuals

above the level of the class to which they belong. It cannot lift the class as a whole. My view of the aim of the Anti-Untouchability League is that it has come into existence not for helping a few individuals at random or a few selected boys belonging to the Depressed Classes but for raising the whole class to a higher level. Consequently, I would not like the League to dissipate its energies on a programme calculated to foster private virtue. I would like the Board to concentrate all its energies on a programme that will effect a change in the social environment of the Depressed Classes" (Vol. 9, pp: 134-35).

Why has the argument which he made then—that we have to compel human beings to change and that it is of no use to preach rational ideas—become upside down? He said change does not occur by rational ideas. Well, then what happens due to the Buddha's preaching? Is it not change of ideas?

Moreover, here Ambedkar is arguing that the path of individual reform will not uplift the class as a whole, that we have to change the social conditions of the class and that there is no use of the programme that raises the level of individual's virtue.

The Hindu reformers like Gandhi, without concentrating on the problem of poverty among untouchables, focus their attention on changing the bad habits of individual untouchables with such slogans as 'stop drinking toddy'...and so on. In order to oppose reforms of this sort, Ambedkar argues that we have to change the class conditions and personal virtues do not lift the class. This argument suits to counter such reforms.

But Marx too talked of changing social conditions only, didn't he? Then why did Ambedkar oppose him?

While opposing the Congress, changing the social environment became more important than personal virtue! Whereas while opposing Marx, reforming the individual in order to raise personal virtue became more important!

If we want to reconcile that Ambedkar realized his mistake which he committed on an earlier occasion and hence spoke differently on another occasion, no where do we find such a clarification or explanation.

Does Ambedkar speak wrongly? No, it is impossible! Whatever he says is right! He spoke whatever he wanted and whenever he wanted! He is right whatever he says!

Here we may recall a little of what Ambedkar said earlier about Roman slaves. Did Ambedkar have the same view—that individual reform may raise the level of certain individuals but does not lift the whole class—when he discussed the condition of Roman slaves? How could he

describe that Roman slaves lived in comfort and joy with education, art and business? There why didn't he raise the question, 'will the condition of the few be the condition of all slaves?' There he talked so because he wanted to say that slaves lived more comfortably than untouchables. As he wanted to oppose Gandhi, he said that 'individual reform is not enough' in his letter to Thakkar. Whereas while opposing Marx he is saying here that the path that raises the level of personal virtue is the best way. What should we call all this? Do we have to call this, 'honest discussion'?

Ambedkar's suggestion to Communists:

In the same breath when he said that building up the communist state is useless, Ambedkar gave suggestions to Communists concerning the care that they have to take with reference to the state rule. According to him they may retain the state to some period by means of use of force but they have to abandon it and embrace some religion!

> "The only thing which could sustain it after force is withdrawn is Religion" (p. 460).

Ambedkar's argument proceeds further along the following lines.

> "Communists hate religion. They hate those religions which talk of gods and other world. Buddhism is not that kind of religion. There are no superstitious beliefs in it. It preaches good conduct. It prohibits murder, theft, prostitution, untruth, intoxicants etc. It shows the path of eliminating greed, avarice, ill will, sloth and drowsiness, distraction and flurry and doubt. The householder who acquires property lawfully will not only be happy but also make his wife, children and servants happy and hence Buddhism preaches acquiring property lawfully. Therefore we should not treat Buddhism like other religions. Buddhism is an ultimate aid to sustain Communism when force is withdrawn" (p.460-61).

What sort of argument is this? This means theft, prostitution, murders and all kinds of crimes remain in Communist society until it embraces Buddhism! Then if Communist society practices Buddhism, all people will become good people and all those vices will disappear! Even then the owners acquire properties lawfully and live happily with their servants and workers! How can it be Communism if all these relationships continue? Does Communism have to take the help of Buddhism only to sustain these relationships (of owners and servants etc.)?

There is nothing to pity the Buddha but there is lot to pity Ambedkar. Take any context in which he talked of Marxism, nowhere do we see him talking about it with any knowledge.

If a theory can initiate and sustain Communist society, that theory itself include in it a system that would take society forward. Proper

implementation of the theory is the only thing that is needed. It won't need the help of any 'religion'.

Well, let us see as per Ambedkar's view. He is saying that after changing society by means of Marxism, we have to follow Buddhism, isn't he? This means, Marxism is the first requirement. Only thereafter we need Buddhism. Did Ambedkar advise Dalits to learn Marxism before he advised Communists to follow Buddhism? There is no such thing. There is not a single context in which he talked a single good word about Marxism. Moreover there are many occasions on which he created opposition against Marxism.

Ambedkar's opposition to Marxism reached such a stage that he described Marxism as a philosophy that turns human beings into pigs! As Marxism does not accept any religion, Ambedkar's criticism proceeds as follows for the same reason.

> "Carlyle called Political Economy a Pig Philosophy. Carlyle was of course wrong. For man needs material comforts. But the Communist Philosophy seems to be equally wrong for the aim of their philosophy seems to be fatten pigs as though men are no better than pigs. Man must grow materially as well as spiritually" (p. 462).

The essence of Ambedkar's view is this: Human beings need material needs; but they should also grow spiritually. Whereas for pigs, it is enough if they have food. They don't need spirituality. To think that human beings need only material comforts (like food etc.,) is to equate human beings with animals. Communism does not say that humans need spirituality. Hence it is a philosophy useful for pigs and not human beings. This is Ambedkar's criticism!

But what does 'growing spiritually' means? To be like a Buddhist monk. If a person gets his head shaven, wears saffron clothes, invades the householders in the village and enjoy feasts, collects gifts, sits with folded legs daily for some time, becomes an expert in breathing from one nostril and leave it through another—This is what growing spiritually means! Since there is no place for these mad things in Communism, it is a pig philosophy!

How comfortable is it to live like pigs if we are free from the menace of religious fanaticism?

From this preacher who understood Communism so beautifully, Dalits will learn only circus feats that enable them to experiment with their noses!

In this manner, Ambedkar went on saying, in his essay, *Buddha or Karl Marx?*, that Marxism is useless, didn't he? But in the very last paragraph he showed some 'mercy' on Communism!

> "It has been claimed that the Communist Dictatorship in Russia has wonderful achievements to its credit. There can be no denial of it. That is why I say that a Russian Dictatorship would be good for all backward countries" (p. 461).

"It has been claimed", says Ambedkar with reference to "Communist Dictatorship in Russia". This means he only heard about it and he doesn't know to what extent it was true or not true. There is no attempt to know that theory. At one place he calls it a 'Pig Philosophy' and at another place he says 'it has wonderful achievements and it is good for all backward countries'! Finding fault and praising: both without knowing about it! Since Russia appeared to be a country that was striving for the working class people and since it would not look nice if it is not appreciated even that much, Ambedkar resorted to this appreciation!

But this appreciation too did not last longer, you know? As an antidote to that minimal praise for Communism, he concluded that Communism does not give other good features except equality. Here Ambedkar's argument proceeded as follows:

> "Society has been aiming to lay a new foundation was summarised by the French Revolution in three words, Fraternity, Liberty and Equality. The French Revolution was welcomed because of this slogan. It failed to produce equality. We welcome the Russian Revolution because it aims to produce equality. But it cannot be too much emphasized that in producing equality society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can coexist only if one follows the way of the Buddha. Communism can give one but not all" (p. 462).

Thus ended the essay *Buddha or Karl Marx?* We are yet to see the truth or untruth of the observations expressed at the end of this essay.

What is equality? Ambedkar is saying that the Buddha's path give all the good features whereas Marxism gives only one feature. But if a given theory is really able to give equality, it will be able to give other good features as well. Because equality is the basis for all good changes. All other features form from this basis only. To examine whether this is true or not we have to consider some illustrations.

According to Marxism, equality means performance of labour by all people and absence of any owner/master as such.

When there is equality, 'liberty' transforms into this equality in an appropriate manner. This is how it happens: whoever acquires property before the emergence of equality, he could be an owner. But if a person has the liberty to be a owner, many human beings have to enter servitude. In such conditions, the liberty which we find there is not that of labourers

but that of owners. As 'equality' is absent, liberty will also be unilateral in accordance to those conditions. But if we assume equality among all people, then no individual will have the liberty to be an owner. This means, every individual will have the liberty to lead a life free from servitude. In other words, the liberty of olden days now transforms in accordance with equality. If only some persons have liberty when equality is absent, all people will have liberty when equality is present.

Similarly, if we consider the issue of fraternity, it is brotherhood and sisterhood. This is a cooperative living together of people and sharing of comforts and as well as hardships. This also forms in accordance with equality wherever it exists. When there are 'owner-labourer relations' (for that matter in any relation involving mutually contradictory features, namely, domination and servitude), the owner does not bother about the labourers' hardships or comforts. But when all people do labour the hardships and comforts of all people will be the same. All persons will extend cooperation to each other.

Ambedkar is saying that Marx's path gives only equality and does not give the other good features (liberty and fraternity), isn't he? Of the three features—liberty, equality and fraternity—equality is the fundamental issue. If this exists other features too exist. If there was no equality the other features too will not exist. Ambedkar is also accepting that Marx's path gives equality. This means that this path also gives other good feature. The Buddha's path does not eliminate 'owner-labourer relations'. Hence, it does not give equality. Such a path will not give other good features.

So, what is the conclusion? Marx's path alone will give all the features. The Buddha's path does not give even one good feature. This is what is concluded—contrary to what Ambedkar said!

The incidents comparing the Buddha and Marx are found not only in volume 3 but also here and there in volume 11.

Ambedkar raised some questions, 'Did the Buddha teach liberty? Did the Buddha teach equality?...Could the Buddha answer Karl Marx?' and concluded that the Buddha's path is the best one (Vol. 11, p. 226).

All this confusion would not have been there had Ambedkar stopped raising so many kinds of questions and put to himself only one question, 'what is equality?' and search for the answer!

There is no short cut left out which Ambedkar did not resort to in order to denigrate Marx's path and glorify the Buddha's path.

He says that the Buddha's path is "not borrowed from any one, yet so true" (Vol. 11, p. 317). This implies that Marx's theory is something that has been borrowed whereas the Buddha's theory is not of that sort! This means that if a country has a good feature other countries should not learn it! Why did the same person praise that China, Burma, Tibet, Thailand and Indonesia had accepted Buddhism from India and it spread across many foreign countries? Can those countries 'borrow' from India? According to Ambedkar, all countries should borrow Buddhism but no country should borrow Marx's theory. This is the level of cultural refinement of Ambedkar! This is what 'growing spiritually' means!

When he had a strong belief that Buddhism gives liberty and equality, why didn't Ambedkar advise Dalits to give up all means like reservations and follow only Ashtanga Marga? Doesn't this question require an answer?

Ambedkar, here and there, keeps describing how contradictory the lives of rich and poor:

> "Practically speaking in a class structure there is, on the one hand, tyranny, vanity, pride, arrogance, greed, selfishness and on the other, insecurity, poverty, degradation, loss of liberty, self-reliance, independence, dignity and self-respect" (p. 285).

But he gives the same sermon to these two mutually contradictory classes! Same path! Ashtanga Marga! He has no question, 'why does the rich class follow the same path which the poor class follows?'

> "The caste system far from natural is really an imposition by the ruling classes upon the servile classes" (Vol. 9, p. 289).

There are both ruling classes and the servile classes! But the path is the same for both the classes! Asthanga Marga! It is not the class struggle which the servile class should wage in order to overthrow the ruling class which dominates it! This, Ambedkar doesn't like!

Do we need to examine so many hundreds of pages in order to compare the Buddha and Marx? Any one page is enough! The Buddha was favourable to the propertied class! Marx is totally opposed to it! According to the Buddha, riches and poverty are natural phenomena like light and darkness. According to Marx they are the contradictions which emerge due to exploitation of labour. All that the Buddha speaks is status quo! What Marx speaks is 'revolution'! Total change! Where is the comparison between the two? Is it not the most surprising thing that any Dalit—who claims 'the progress of Dalits' as his objective— expresses so meaningless a hatred for a theory which explains the liberation of labouring class?

What good that this leader did to Dalits when he recommended them Ashtanga Marga, shaving of the heads, shameless lazy life of begging in the name of alms—without creating any positive attitude toward Marxism? Except a wrong path, what path did he show the people who believed that he would show them the path of liberation?

> "Social reform in India has few friends and many critics. The critics fall into two distinct classes. One class consists of political reformers and the other of the Socialists" (Vol. 1, p. 38).

Whether it is 'Socialists', 'Communists' and 'Marxists', we have to take these words in the same sense. Ambedkar used all these three words in the same sense.

Social reform may relate to any problem. But Ambedkar is talking here about 'annihilation of castes' only. Socialists are totally in favour of this reform and not opposed to it. Then why does Ambedkar say that Socialists are opposed to social reform? Because, Socialists argue that total elimination of castes is not possible unless the 'foundation' or 'base' changes.

Ambedkar does not like Socialists' conception of 'society'. Socialists say that 'labour relations' constitute the foundation of society. They argue that the foundation is based on 'exploitation' and without shaking it, it is not possible to solve totally the problems that arise from it. But they don't say that social reforms are unnecessary and should not be carried out. Wherever possible, to whatever extent possible, struggles should go on either in the form of reforms or temporary revolts. These struggles, however, should be linked with the struggles of abolition of classes. The labouring class should gradually acquire class-consciousness. This is what socialists say.

All this, Ambedkar doesn't like. According to him, annihilation of caste must take place first. That is, intercaste marriages should take place in all directions on a large scale. Only after this happens, we have to consider the remaining changes. But Socialists do not undertake the programme of intercaste marriages as the primary programme. Hence, in the view of Ambedkar, Socialists too are opposed to annihilation of caste. All this criticism against Socialists is from the essay *Annihilation of Caste* (Vol. 1). Ambedkar did not show a single point of Socialists' criticism.

Just as in the case of other issues, Ambedkar's views on 'castes' too are not consistent. This, we have already observed earlier. At some places, he says that the problem of untouchables is the 'land' problem, that it is a problem of confinement to unclean jobs, that the occupation of property

is the weapon in the hands of upper castes and thus there is a link between property and castes. Again at other places, he talks as if there is no link between properties and castes. Ambedkar, who has no clarity regarding the question of 'property' keeps criticising Socialists (who have clarity of the issue) as if they are under illusion. For example, he says,

> "The fallacy of the Socialists lies in supposing that because in the present stage of European Society property as a source of power is predominant, that the same is true of India..." (Vol. 1, p. 45).

This means, for Ambedkar property is not the source of power in India whereas it is in Europe, that too present day Europe only. But what exists in the present day Europe is developed capitalism. Therefore, 'capital' appears clearly as property. For Ambedkar, the small-scale capital or land do not appear as property. That is why, he thought the source for power is property only in Europe and not in India.

But anywhere in the world, at any point of time, the source of power is nothing but property. That is, exploitative property or property based on exploitation! Power is unnecessary if it is not for the purpose of exploitation (that is for the purpose of making others do labour for you). If all people are equal in the sense that all people perform labour, then power will not exist at all.

The same person who said that property is the weapon of upper castes did not hesitate to say that 'property is not the source of power in India'! Again he has not consistently held this view.

Arguing that power does not have a single source but has 3 sources, he mentions property as one of the three sources.

> "Religion, social status and property are all sources of power and authority, which one man has, to control the liberty of another. One is predominant at one stage, the other is predominant at another stage. That is the difference" (Vol. 1, p. 45).

According to Ambedkar religion, social status and property—all the three are fundamental factors ('sources'). If we go by this understanding, religion is an autonomous factor independent of property. Therefore, it implies that we can solve the problems of religion without reference to property! Caste is a religious problem that arose from Hinduism. This means, in order to solve the problem of caste, there is no need to link it with the question of property! That is, we will be able to solve the caste problem without reference to property! Similarly, the question of hierarchical differences in the social status is also an autonomous issue unconnected with property. We can solve this question too without reference to property. This is Ambedkar's argument!

But all this is wrong. The correct understanding should be: the three issues, namely, property, religion and social status are not equally autonomous. Of the three, 'property' alone is the fundamental issue. The remaining two issues arise from property relations. We have to solve the problem of property first in order to solve the problems connected with the other two issues.

It is needless to say again and again whenever we speak of property, we refer to 'property of exploiters' or 'property based on exploitation'.

To examine the kind of link that property and social status have, consider chronologically the very first classes in society, namely, class of slaves and class of slave-masters! Master's social status is high and slave's low. If a person is a master, another person will be a slave. What is the reason for this? Possession of property by the master and non-possession of property by the slave. If we remove and keep that 'property' aside, one is not a master and the other not a slave. This means social status is not something unconnected with property.

Similarly, take any other example involving hierarchical differences in the social status! We can see that such distinctions arise only due to property.

The link between property and social status appears directly sometimes and with some modifications at other times. Some persons, though do not have property, may have high social status due to higher education and higher forms of arts. Seeing this fact, we should not think that there is no connection between property and social status. Higher education and Arts are different forms of property. They are acquired by means of property only. They in turn give power to acquire property. There is no question of acquiring them without any connection with property.

How was it possible for Ambedkar—who did not have property to study abroad and raise his social status? It was possible because Zamindars (Feudal lords/Landlords) gave 'money' to him. How did they get money? Did they give Ambedkar the money which they earned by means of hard work and sweat of their brow? They have been occupying hundreds and thousands of acres of lands as their properties for ages. They rent out their lands, live luxuriously with the money they squeezed from the peasants in the name of rents, gave a fistful of money as charity, supported artists and earned fame as persons of great charity. Such is the money which Ambedkar got. If there was no such property, Ambedkar would not have received education abroad and there wouldn't have been the corresponding social status. This means, whatever be the form of social status it is not something that does not emerge without any connection with property.

The same is the case with 'religion'. During the primitive times when exploitative property had not yet begun, the conception of nature which humans held consisted of ignorance and fear only. It was not yet a 'religion'. Religion began only after 'exploitation' began as an admixture of ignorance and the sermons that subjugate slaves.

A religious preacher or a Sanyasi may be a propertyless person. But, if that person preaches slaves, 'one who serves the master with loyalty will go to heaven. Gods will shower flowers on such a person', then this preaching is favourable to exploitative property. And this preaching itself is religion. Its function is to make slaves believe heaven and gods. Religion, even today, is performing the function of keeping working class in superstitious beliefs. When people believe the sermons of a propertyless Sanyasi, we should not arrive at the conclusion that there is no relationship between property and religion. The function that religion performs through Sanyasi is protection of property. This means, religion has emerged due to the problem of property and is not an autonomous factor. If there is no exploitation, there will be no need of religion; so also there will not be distinctions in the social status.

If we want to solve problems in society permanently but not temporarily and fundamentally but not superficially, we have to question the foundation of property relations. Those who do not agree with this understanding will only search for solutions superficially. This is what Ambedkar did. His criticism of those who emphasize economic matters is as follows:

> "If liberty is the idea,... it cannot be insisted upon that economic reform must be the one kind of reform worthy of pursuit... social reform and religious reform must be accepted as the necessary sort of reform" (Vol.1, p. 45).

"One can thus attack the doctrine of Economic interpretation of History adopted by the Socialists of India" (Vol. 1, p. 46). This means that Socialists are wrong and any one can defeat their argument. But, the surprising thing is, Ambedkar treats economic matters as the least important issues and all the demands that he asked for untouchables are economic demands only. Demanding water for untouchables is an economic demand. Demanding education is an economic demand. Demanding health care system is an economic demand. Demanding separate villages is an economic demand. Every change that frees the suffering of untouchables is economic in nature. If we view these demands as rights, rights too are economic in nature. Though certain restrictions—like 'shudras should not acquire property and should not receive education'—appear as rights outwardly, the essence of the matter is economic. Denial of rights to low castes by upper castes and confining them to free labour and unclean jobs imply

a gain for the upper castes. That is, gain to exploit their labour; and hence it is economic gain.

Take any other problem in society; whether it is concerned with ethnicity, religion, caste, gender or any other kind and even if it appears to be a problem of domination or politics, its roots will be in economic relations.

But, the question of labour relations or its another name economic relations does not at all bother Ambedkar. When one is not concerned with the root cause, what will remain? Only superficial things. That is religion, social status and politics. All discussions of Ambedkar always revolve around superficial things and are not concerned with the root causes.

Among those considered to be 'intellectuals', there are three main categories of people with reference to their attitude to Marxism. The first category of people do not know anything about Marxism. They are not even aware of the fact that there is a theory called 'Marxism'. These people do not speak either in favour of Marxism or against it. They do not at all talk about it. We may consider such people as Non-Marxists.

The second category of intellectuals too do not know anything about Marxism. But they have at least heard its name. They might have heard, though in a half baked manner, both positive and negative opinions concerning Marxism. Thus they grope about in doubt regarding Marxism. But they do not make any attempt to examine what is true and what is false in these opinions. But their opposition to Marxism is not very serious. We may consider such intellectuals too as Non-Marxists.

Now, the third category of intellectuals know something about Marxism. They are aware of the fact that Marxism opposes exploitation and it argues against the possession of private property that fetches exploitative income. But these intellectuals do not like all this. They defend the exploitative sources of income. They, however, do not openly declare: 'let there be exploitation'. They merely rephrase the term according to their convenience. On the whole, they are in favour of exploitative property relations. Thus these intellectuals maintain vehement opposition to Marxism. Such intellectuals will be Anti-Marxists and do not come under the category of Non-Marxists.

Ambedkar need not have spoken in favour of Marxism. He could have expressed doubts concerning the theory. If he had confined himself to such an attitude, one can categorise him as a Non-Marxist. But this was not what Ambedkar did. He had always demonstrated his opposition and hatred towards Marxism that defends the interests of the working class. A campaign against Marxism was one of the objectives of his life.

6) A letter that someone wrote to someone else!

Ambedkar made a great deal of criticism against Indian socialists, didn't he? What is the basis for it? What is the criticism of Socialists against social reforms? Did Ambedkar show any evidence that the Indian Communist Party did something wrong or said something wrong? Do you know what the single piece of evidence that Ambedkar had shown? "I give below a quotation from a letter which a prominent Socialist wrote a few days ago to a friend of mine"—saying this Ambedkar put a letter before readers as evidence. This means Ambedkar had a friend. To this friend, a Socialist friend wrote a letter. This friend had brought that letter and showed it to Ambedkar. Some words in that letter greatly annoyed Ambedkar. This 'letter' alone is the basis for all the criticism of Ambedkar against Indian Socialists in his essay *Annihilation of Caste.*

What is there in that letter? That Socialist wrote as follows:

> "I do not believe that we can build up a free society in India so long as there is a trace of this ill-treatment and suppression of one class by another. Believing as I do in a socialist ideal, inevitably I believe in perfect equality in the treatment of various classes and groups. I think that Socialism offers the only true remedy for this as well as other problems" (Vol. 1, p. 46).

These are the words in the letter! There is nothing wrong in these words, isn't it? The writer of this letter argued against "ill-treatment and suppression of one class by another". He advocated "perfect equality in the treatment of various classes and groups". Why should Ambedkar be angry with these words? Because, the letter writer also said that "socialism offers the only true remedy for this as well as other problems". This is a wrong thing according to Ambedkar! This is what annoyed Ambedkar!

In his essay, *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar shouted at that socialist who wrote such a letter: 'Is it enough if socialists say that all should be equal? Is it enough if they have belief in equality? Is this the way to think about castes?'

Does this mean, that the socialist should have written a few more things? Should he have enumerated what socialist theory says about castes and what his party did and will do in this regard? He would have definitely written all this in his letter if he knew before hand that his letter would go into the hands of Ambedkar and that Ambedkar would get very angry if the letter did not contain a programme for the annihilation of castes. But unfortunately the socialist did not know all this. He wrote couple of

things for his friend informally and received an admonition unnecessarily from Ambedkar.

Is it a believable thing that Ambedkar made his criticism against Socialists just because certain points were not there in a letter which someone wrote to someone else? How surprising this is! But how many times are we surprised and shocked? Surprise and shock have become common because of their frequent recurrence. How can we express our surprise again and again? How nice it would have been if Ambedkar had shown a few words somewhere from Marx just as he showed words from someone's letter! Why didn't Ambedkar do so? Is it because he didn't get hold of Marx's letter? Marx too could have written a letter to some one who lived either in front of or adjacent to Ambedkar's house? Somehow Marx did not do so. Should he always write all his letters to only Engels? Should he not have written at least one letter to Ambedkar's friend? Ambedkar did not quote Marx anywhere since he didn't get Marx's letter. This must be the reason!

It would be nice if somebody conducts research on why some individuals have unlimited arrogance? It is pity that the Buddha said several times at the top of his voice, or to use a Telugu idiom, 'put his mouth above the head and said', that some persons will have arrogance, pride, exaggeration and everything. Though he said that we find all these features, he didn't say why they exist. I think, those features exceed when there is none to question them! Anyway, this aspect of 'arrogance' is a very good topic for research.

7) A justified doubt of Ambedkar

Ambedkar has a big doubt concerning Socialist theory. Socialist theory proposes to eliminate exploitation by means of class struggles. To achieve this, all the working class people should get united. But, there are caste distinctions in India: There is Untouchability. Poor people too observe these distinctions. Under these circumstances, how will all these poor people get united? How will they wage struggles if they don't get united? —This is Ambedkar's doubt. This is a justified and right doubt.

In Ambedkar's words:

> "The assurance of a socialist leading the revolution that he does not believe in caste, I am sure, will not suffice. The assurance must be the assurance proceeding from much deeper foundation...Can it be said that the poor in India recognize no such distinctions of caste or creed, high or low? If the fact is that they do, what unity of front can be expected from such a proletariat in its action against the rich? How can there be

a revolution if the proletariat cannot present a united front?" (Vol. 1, pp: 46-47).

This is a good question. But the way he put the question implies that Socialist theory wrongly assumes that 'it does not matter even if there is no unity within the working class' and hence Ambedkar is questioning such an assumption. Does Socialist theory say that 'we can change society by conducting class struggles even if there are difference within the working class and even if various sections in the working class do not unite? No, it does not say so. It says that the 'unity of the workers' is their strength. It in fact said, 'workers of the world, unite!'

Any organization whose objective is to raise the consciousness of the working people for class struggle, it must consider any problem that obstructs their unity. It has to formulate its programmes in the manner that helps to solve the problem. If it does not do so, we have to criticize that organization and not the socialist theory.

A theory gives general guidelines that apply to all regions and all situations. It also tells that the organizers should take into consideration the specific situations of specific places. It, however, cannot specify the situation at a given place.

When the socialist theory says that we have to change relations of exploitation into relations of non-exploitation, it is meaningless if some one criticises that this theory talked only of exploitation and did not say anything about social reform.

When exploitation exists in society, all sphere of life will have the same exploitative character. Wherever and whatever form of domination exists, it exist because of relations of exploitation and corresponding ideas of exploitation. Therefore elimination of exploitation implies changing all sphere of life. The same applies to either the problem of castes or any other problem.

Caste system in India is a problem that harms the unity of the working class. This is the specific situation of India. If the Socialist party (or, Communist Party) does not take this specific situation into its view, we have to definitely find fault with it and criticise it. The question, however, is did that party do like that? Didn't the party take into account either the caste problem or Untouchability? Didn't the Communist Party of Ambedkar's time conduct campaigns or preach against the caste system? Did it not undertake any activities?

Ambedkar should show if there are any such incidents. He has to expose its conduct saying, 'Look how the Communist Party acted in this

matter'. But Ambedkar did not give even a single piece of information. He did not cite a single incident (except the letter which his friend received!). All the time, Ambedkar's criticism is against Marxism, that too without any justification! Without knowing anything about 'exploitation of labour'!

How do working people get united when there are caste distinctions in India? How will they wage struggles?—This is the problem. Choosing appropriate programmes is the solution.

Even the low caste people observe caste distinctions among them. They do not participate in intercaste dining and intercaste marriages. Under these conditions, it is necessary to tell them that all this is wrong, ignorance and unjust. Campaigns infavour of interdining and intercaste marriages begin to change the old ideas of the people. However, the entire caste problem will not end only by doing this. As this problem is connected with 'exploitation of labour' and old division of labour, people should know about these aspects also. In other words we have to teach Marxism!

Ambedkar further comments as follows:

> "Suppose for the sake of argument that by some freak of fortune a revolution does take place and the Socialists come into power, will they not have to deal with the problems created by the particular social order prevalent in India? I can't see how a Socialist State in India can function for a second without having to grapple with the problems created by the prejudices which make Indian people observe the distinctions of high and low, clean and unclean" (Vol. 1, p. 47).

This is the prejudice of Ambedkar toward the conception of Socialist State and Socialist theory. 'The fact that there are distinctions of high-low and clean-unclean among humans is not something which the Socialist theory does not recognize. These distinctions are the creations of property relations and division of labour prevalent in societies based on exploitation. There is no scope for equality among human beings unless we remove these distinctions.' All this understanding is part of Socialist theory. Ambedkar—without knowing what the Socialist theory actually says—had developed an aversion for the Socialist theory like the propertied class. Owing to this opposition he came to the conclusion that the Socialist State is not concerned with the distinctions of high-low and clean and unclean. Ambedkar's opinion—that the Socialist theory is not concerned with these distinctions—indicates the sense of (ir-)responsibility with which he tried to understand the theory. Who is at fault—Marxism or Ambedkar—if Ambedkar was not concerned with what Marxism said, namely, 'exploitative division of labour must be changed into Socialist division of labour'?

The principle that 'we have to abolish exploitative property rights, and 'every person should perform labour' will remove high-low distinctions. The principle that 'every person should perform not only clean jobs but also unclean jobs' will remove 'clean-unclean' distinction. It is the duty of class of labourers (proletariat) to put the new, revolutionary relations into practice. All those who do unclean jobs in India are part of the proletariat. —Without understanding all this what Ambedkar did was find fault with the Socialist theory.

Once, when there took place a strike in the textile mills of Bombay, Ambedkar laid down a condition to Hindu workers on behalf of Dalit workers. In those days, owing to Untouchability, the mill owners did not use to offer jobs to Dalit workers in all the sections in the mill. At this juncture, Ambedkar laid down a condition that Hindu workers too should demand their mill owners to offer jobs in all the branches of the textile industry. He said that Dalit workers would not participate in the strike if Hindu workers did not demand so.

Though Hindu workers initially did not like the idea of giving up the practice of Untouchability, they thought about it and agreed for the demand. The Hindu workers realized that struggle against the mill owner is primary and not the observance of Untouchability (Vol. 2, p. 474).

There are no details whether the mill owners agreed to the demand or not.

It was possible to weaken at least to some extent the superstitious beliefs because of argument and discussion with the Hindu workers. False ideas will definitely become weak if we teach new and reasonable ideas. These campaigns and preaching are not meant for a class that lives on exploitation. These are necessary for the people. These educative programmes are the first step toward changing either the Hindu people or the Dalit people.

If Ambedkar wishes for the emancipation of 'low' castes, he should create a negative attitude toward caste distinctions and a positive attitude toward Marxism among low caste people. But he has not done any one of these things. He has not done both the things. Since he did not have a positive attitude towards Marxism he did not create a positive impression among Dalits. He concluded that Marxism is useless and they should follow only Buddhism.

If we consider the 'caste question', he concluded that annihilation of castes is not possible and there is no solution for it since Brahmins do no lead the movement for annihilation of the castes.

This means, the 'low' caste people did not receive from Ambedkar either a programme to fight against the caste system or Marxism which is the path of their liberation. They received nothing useful from Ambedkar.

17 AMBEDKAR'S OWN ECONOMICS

Ambedkar occasionally tells us that he is a student of Economics (Vol. 2, p. 230). His Economics is largely a Capitalist Economics. The rest of it is his 'own' Economics. Nowhere do we see that he is aware of the existence of Marxist Economics.

There are heaps of problems of various kinds in society and Ambedkar tried to find out brand new solutions. He claimed that he had found them. But all his brand new solutions turned out to be the same old affairs that have been in existence since the days of 'slave masters'.

Once Ambedkar discovered a beautiful solution for the problem of 'Industrial disputes'. He even guaranteed industrial peace if it was followed. Ambedkar, who was a nominated member representing Dalits in Bombay Assembly spoke at length on the 'Industrial Disputes Bill' in September 1938. The Economics knowledge that Ambedkar exhibited in his speech surprises a lot.

Arguing that there is a lot of injustice being done, that the men managing the industries on behalf of their owners are enjoying the fruits and that the Prime Minister of Bombay should think about doing justice, Ambedkar said,

> "A very good part of the earning of the industry is swallowed by these people. From the little balance that is left, the workers are asked to eke out their existence. If the Honourable Prime Minister wants to introduce equity, let him make the workers' wages the first charge on the profits of industry" (Vol. 2, pp: 230-31).

It is correct to see the large part of salaries which higher level employees—who control the workers on behalf of employers—receive are part of the profit. But what does 'payment of workers' wages from profit' mean? Do they pay wages from profit? Wages are a part of the capital. Means of production and wages together constitute capital. When a commodity is produced, more value than its capital will form. When it is sold, capital returns (that is, expenses of means of production and wages

return) and some additional value also comes. This is profit (Here we are calling the entire surplus value 'profit'. This profit too is the labour of workers only. But this goes to the owner). Here our concern is with the wages of the workers. It is part of the 'capital' but not part of the 'profit'. Even a junior student of Economics knows that wages are a part of the capital.

Ambedkar is telling the 'Honourable' Prime Minister of Bombay that he should bring out a new bill so that the workers will first take their wages from the profit of the industry and only thereafter can the owner swallow the remaining profit. In this manner, he is suggesting to the Prime Minister to be fair. This means, in the view of Ambedkar swallowing of some portion in the profit (whether he swallows it at the beginning or later) is fair. This is because Ambedkar is a student of capitalist Economics!

Regarding 'profit', Ambedkar's understanding is as follows:

> "...the owner of an industry... gets his earning not entirely by his capital but also by the sweat of another man" (Vol. 2, p. 231).

This amounts to saying that the profit of the owner of an industry comes from 2 sources.

(1) From the money that the owner invests. That is from 'capital'.

(2) From the sweat of the workers. That is from their labour. (This means, while one portion of profit comes due to the sweat of workers, another portion comes due to the non-sweat of owners)

The two ways that Ambedkar mentioned relate to either Capitalist Economics or Marxist Economics.

According to Capitalist Economics, the entire profit comes from the capital that the owner invests. The workers will not have any role in getting the profit. They receive wages in return for their labour. The owner does not get anything from them. Hence, they have nothing to do with profit.

According to Marxist Economics, the entire profit comes from the labourers. Capitalist invests capital on (1) means of production and (2) the wages of workers. Of these two, means of production do not give more value than their own. Nothing extra comes from them beyond their value. The portion of 'wages' alone gives more value. True that workers receive wages in return for their labour. But, wage itself is not the value of labour. It is only a part of the value of labour. The remaining part is profit (surplus value). Only workers have a role and not the means of production in producing more value than the originally invested capital. This is the Marxist explanation.

This means that no variety of Economics agrees with Ambedkar's explanation that profit comes from 2 ways! Capitalist Economics does not agree if he says 'some portion of profit comes from the workers'. Likewise, Marxist Economics does not agree if he says that 'some portion of profit comes from the means of production'.

This means, Ambedkar's analysis that 'profit comes from both the sides (the means of production and workers) constitutes his own Economics!

This 'own Economics' appears at many more places.

> "It would be difficult for any economist with any reputation to save who could deny that labour has as much claim on the wealth produced as capital if not more" (Vol. 1, p. 121).

This observation refers to the question, 'What are the respective rights of 'capital' and 'labour' over the wealth (value) produced?" The answer to this problem should be based on the question, 'What are the respective roles of capital and labour in producing that value?' Each factor should get the value proportionate to the amount of value that it produces. The rights of capital or labour over the value produced (should) depend on their respective roles in producing that value.

But, this understanding is absent in Ambedkar. In this problem, he suggests that 'labour should not get more than capital' and 'capital should not get more than labour'. The two sides should get equal shares. Should they receive equal shares or according to the respective roles that they have played in producing that value?

When children quarrel over some eatables elders say exactly the same: 'it is wrong to quarrel like this! Both should take equal shares!' This solution is right in the case of children. Is 'mediation by elders as in the case of children' a solution for capital and labour too? Idiosyncratic solutions such as these arise only when people don't have a proper understanding of 'value'.

Ambedkar discovered many more idiosyncratic ways. He suggested a way out for industrial peace. It is as follows: The owners of industry have to put before workers all their accounts! Workers will inspect them! For this purpose a new law is necessary. The workers have to inspect the accounts with a view that acknowledges the right of the owner to get profit! They have to accept all the accounts concerning interest, rent, commercial commission and profit. The owner can 'swallow' profit but the workers have to see that he does not swallow too much.

If the owner puts before workers all his accounts, workers will be able to inspect whether or not there remains a profit adequate to their wages!

Ambedkar is cautioning workers that they should inspect the accounts of the owner in that manner.

> "Once a budget of that kind is presented by the owner of an industry, the workers would be in a position to realise and scrutinise whether the balance that is left to be divisible among the labourers is fair or whether the employer has taken an undue portion of the total profit. What is the use of having a conciliation board and asking the employers to produce their account books when the employee is not placed in a position to scrutinise what is really the state of affairs?" (Vol. 2, p. 231).

The law should put the workers in a position whereby they examine the accounts of their owner. The workers have to agree that the owner is entitled to get profit, interest, rent and everything of that sort—this is the new change that Ambedkar wished. This mean, workers have to harm themselves or to use a Telugu figurative expression, 'they have to prick their eyes with their own fingers'.

Ambedkar is claiming as follows how his suggestion results in a great change.

> "If the procedure I suggest is adopted, I am sure about it that there will be few labour troubles, the conciliation will be more effective and there will be more industrial peace" (Vol. 2, p. 231).

From this it is clear that Ambedkar is sure about one thing: that the owner can swallow profit, the money lender can swallow interest and the rentier rent. These are their respective rights! Whereas wages to workers!

When workers inspect all these accounts and okay it them saying, 'we have checked everything sir! It is very nice! You can swallow your profit comfortably', why will there be industrial disputes? Won't there be unanimity among classes? Wont' there be industrial peace?

Ambedkar comments on the government as if he is speaking very frankly about it:

> "...the government in any dispute is always on the side of employers" (Vol. 2, p. 231).

This means, he believes and wants all of us to believe that he does not side owners but sides workers.

Ambedkar becomes furious on the government's use of the police against workers while they are on strike. A mill manager bribed the police to fire at the striking workers (Vol. 2, p. 235). Ambedkar wonders at this a lot, 'Is this not injustice? Are the police meant to suppress workers? As if he does not at all know that the police are meant to suppress workers?' He puts another question, 'won't the Home Minister does take such

incidents seriously! Again and again he reiterates his suggestions to maintain industrial peace. He says that real equality between owners and workers can be brought about if the government follows his two suggestions. According to the first suggestion, the government should compel the owner to reveal his budget. According to the second suggestion, the government should not use the police force every now and then. What does it mean to suggest that the government should not use police force every now and then? Does it mean that it can use force on major occasions like 'revolts' rather minor incidents like strikes? If this is not the meaning what does it mean? When should the government use police?

Referring to these two suggestions, he says:

> "real equality between employers and employees can be brought about only by incorporating these two provisions" (Vol. 2, p. 231).

Where is the question of equality between two individuals when one of them is an employer (mill owner) and another an employee (mill worker)? Moreover 'real equality'! This means, 'unreal equality'!

According to Ambedkar, employers, workers and the police who defend the employers—every one is just as before! Profits to employers, wages to workers and arms in the hands of the police—every thing remains as before! Yet 'real equality' will emerge if workers inspect the profit quota as shown in the accounts of employers and if the government does not use the police force every now and then! If no intellectual has so far suggested this solution for industrial peace and equality between employers and workers, this is certainly a 'new' solution!

1) What is the aim of the political power of Dalits?

Some social scientists argue that injustice will disappear and an ideal society will emerge if people receive education. Rejecting such arguments, Ambedkar questions, 'All Brahmins are educated, but how many of them realized that caste distinctions are unjustifiable?' (Vol.5, p.397). This is a good question that can counter the arguments or to use a Telugu idiom, 'shut the mouths' of such social scientists. This answer is enough to counter their arguments. But, more than this, the fact that one should know is that 'education too has class nature'! The education of Brahmins is in accordance with their interests. Which means, it preaches the observance of caste distinctions. According to their education, observance of caste distinctions is justified. It alone is the ideal! Hence the question, 'why are educated people too observing caste distinctions?'—is meaningless. As the existing education taught people to observe caste distinctions, educated

people observe the same. In a society where people are split into different classes, every thing acquires class nature. If we don't take this fact into consideration, we cannot understand any thing.

Ambedkar sinks in contradiction at every point because he does not analyse any issue from the perspective of 'class distinctions'.

Ambedkar did not make any attempt to teach class outlook to untouchables even in those contexts when he suggested that the untouchables should strive for political power. Why does the Working Class population in fact need political power at all? To liberate themselves from economic exploitation and other problems that arise from it. But it is not the aim of Ambedkar. According to him, political power means simply achieving representation in bourgeois legislature. They have to achieve only that. If you ask why that representation, it is not to fight against exploitation but only to secure petty reforms. Regarding this 'political power', Ambedkar says the following in his *A warning to the Untouchables.*

> "The second thing they must strive for is power. It must not be forgotten that there is a real conflict of interest between the Hindus and the Untouchables... What makes one interest dominant over another is power. That being so, power is needed to destroy power....the economic power of the working class is the power inherent in the strike. The Untouchables as part of the working class can have no other economic power. As it is, this power is not adequate for the defense of the interests of the working class. It is maimed by legislation and made subject to injunctions, arbitrations, martial law and use of troops. Much more inadequate is the Untouchables' power to strike. The Untouchable is therefore under an absolute necessity of acquiring political power as much as possible. Having regard to his increasingly inadequate power in social and economic terms the Untouchable can never acquire too much political power. Whatever degree of political power he acquires, it will always be too little having regard to the vast amount of social, economic and political power of the Hindus. The Untouchable must remember that his political power, no matter how large, will be of no use if he depends for representation in the Legislature on Hindus..." (Vol. 5, p.399).

If we understand these words with difficulty, what Ambedkar said here is the following.

1) Untouchables alone should go to the legislature as the representatives of untouchables and Hindus should not go as the representatives of untouchables.

2) Untouchables too are part of the working class. Yet, they can not achieve anything if they rely on struggles like strikes because the government imposes restrictions on strikes. It uses the military. It may lead

to military rule. There will be such obstacles. Though they are able to improve their economic condition to some extent, untouchables can not achieve political power by means of strikes.

3) Untouchables cannot achieve political power if they merely keep in view mainly the social and economic needs. Hence, political power is the "absolute necessity". They have to strive for that.

This is the essence of Ambedkar's words. This means, Ambedkar, without creating any positive attitude toward class struggle, taught Untouchables to push themselves into capitalist governments. He did not even think this as an immediate need. It is every thing for him: both immediate need and permanent need.

Well, Dalit candidates get some seats in legislatures through elections. What will they do with that power for the sake of the liberation of their class? Will they insist on laws that will change property relations? Will they insist that land be given to Dalits since they do not have land? Will they insist on laws that will change the situation, which is making Untouchables confine to unclean labour? No, there is no such attempt. There are no such changes in the view of Ambedkar.

Then what is the aim of political power of the Dalits? The aim of political power of Dalits is the same as that of the people belonging to the upper castes. That is, the Dalit candidates do the same thing that the Hindu candidates do in the legislature. This means that Dalits too, by means of their political power, participate in the ruling that continues the existing relations of exploitative property! In no context where he preached political power, did Ambedkar suggest that 'we should change these property relations by means of our political power!'

But Ambedkar uttered the term: 'economic exploitation'! 'economic exploitation!', didn't he? Then, is the political power of Dalits not meant for liberating from economic exploitation? Even after the entry of Dalits into legislature, land and capital would remain under the control of the same class as they were before. All the laws that protect them will also remain as before. New laws will also be made. If some of the labouring people—who do not believe that this government will do good for them—go on strikes or resort to revolts to occupy the properties, the government—of which Dalit representatives are a part—will lead its army against those struggles. It will impose many restrictions. It will take all the care necessary to keep property relations intact. Dalit legislative members too will be party to these steps, or, to use a Telugu idiom, 'will lend one of their hands'; not only one hand but both the hands!

Ambedkar—who cautioned the Dalits to remember the fact that the

interests of Hindus and Dalits are not identical—he himself, it seems, does not remember that fact. He did not give the Dalits any programme appropriate to their interests.

If they are able to *intrude* into the legislature, interests of all fellows (both Hindus and Dalits) in fact will become one and the same.

Owing to the membership in the legislative assembly, they can acquire as much property as possible. They can become capitalists if they secure government contracts. If they are lucky, they can get ministerships. They can even rise to the level of a President. Further, if it is possible, they can form governments aligning with Hindus. Then anyway, it amounts to identity of interests of Hindus and Dalits.

The Dalit population that can not enter the legislative assemblies is in millions in the outside world; outside the legislature and they have heaps of problems. What can Dalit legislators do even if they keep these problems in mind? Anyway their legislative assemblies cannot solve those problems. Then what is the use of remembering those problems?

Why do Dalits need political power if they cannot solve their problems? The aim of the political power is the same for Dalits just as for Hindus. Each will try their *luck*. When Ambedkar himself did not give a programme for the entire class of Dalits, what can a Dalit legislator do other than improving his own condition?

Ambedkar has boundless attention and interest toward capitalist governments. He keeps delivering long speeches in legislative assemblies concerning the kind of best programmes, which the governments should undertake for the welfare of the people. Without bothering at all about the great heaps of income, which the propertied class appropriates from the labouring class throughout the country, he gives emotional speeches concerning the fistful of income that the government gets in the form of taxes. Ambedkar gave many good suggestions that the government should take care of education and rural water resources, that it should not collect fees for education, that it should not commercialize education, that it should reduce allocation of funds to arms, that it should develop the backward classes and so on and so forth. These are his sermons to the government whose branches consist of laws and administrative machinery that protect exploitation!

This killing of time and talking much in legislative assemblies are meant to change some numbers in the taxes hither and thither while giving the freedom to the class of owners of extracting masses of labour daily from the working class!

Ambedkar delivers speeches even on the society where exploitation does not exist:

> "In a society where there is exemption from restraint, a secured release from obstruction, in a society where every man is entitled not only to the means of being, but also of well-being, where no man is forced to labour so that another may abound in luxuries, where no man is deprived of his right to cultivate his faculties and powers so that there may be no competition with the favoured, where there is emphasis of reward by mento, where there is goodwill towards all,..." (Vol. 12, p. 735).

He described such a society as a good society and such an environment as a good environment in which people ought to live.

Marxism also talks of the same kind of society, doesn't it? It also talks of a society "where no man is forced to labour so that another man abound in luxuries". It wishes for a society where there is no scope for any one to acquire wealth and comfort by means of exploitation of labour, doesn't it? Then why didn't Ambedkar accept Marxism?

When they first hear that there is a theory that fights against the propertied class, all the poor labouring people belonging to the lower castes—who experience many sufferings and insults from propertied persons—should be amazed and their eyes are dazzled even if they don't know more about it! But Ambedkar did not respond so!

Those who hate Marxism, though they don't know anything except that it exposed the truth of exploitation of labour, hate it very seriously. Likewise, those who love it too may love it deeply just because they heard that it exposed the secret of exploitation of labour and showed the path of liberation for the poor.

But Ambedkar could not at all love Marxism. Moreover like the propertied class, he developed hatred for it.

Ambedkar too once in a while imagine a higher form of society where there is no economic exploitation. But the path that he shows is the bourgeois legislative assembly! The bourgeois governments! In other words, a path to exploitation-less society via exploitation!

Once in a while Ambedkar develops a feeling of despair and hopelessness towards his own path. While discussing economic issues, he says as follows:

> "In spite of many social and economic changes, in spite of the abolition of legal serfdom, legal slavery and the spread of the notion of democracy... there remains and perhaps will remain enough cleavage in

society into a learned and an ignorant class, a leisure and a labouring class" (Vol. 9, pp: 284-85).

Existence of "cleavage in society into a learned and an ignorant class, a leisure and a labouring class" implies the existence of relations of exploitation. The same thing happens if class struggle does not continue; capitalist society will remain.

If we preach that sharing of power in bourgeois legislative bodies alone is the aim of Dalits—without realizing how necessary it is to struggle against exploitation of labour and its exploitative division of labour—the present day inequalities will always remain as they are. How will changes take place if those who have to struggle do not struggle? But according to Ambedkar, all those inequalities may be natural and these inequalities may be inevitable! The cleavage between leisure class and labouring class too will remain forever, and that too is natural, according to Ambedkar.

Just as education of religious texts gave *knowledge* to Brahmins, the education of capitalistic degrees gave so much knowledge to Ambedkar!

18 ROLE OF AMBEDKAR IN 'DRAFTING' THE CONSTITUTION

There are two more important issues that we have to examine concerning Ambedkar. They are: the Constitution of India and Change of Religion.

There were many activities that Ambedkar undertook in his fight against Untouchability. For the sake of the Dalits, he published some journals; and started some organizations; some schools, colleges and hostels. He formed a union for the Dalit workers. He also formed a political party. He led some movements. We find all this information in detail in biographies of Ambedkar. I am not giving those details in this essay since the aim of this essay is not to narrate Ambedkar's biography. In this essay, I have mainly referred to writings and movements of Ambedkar concerning the Dalit question.

So far we have not mentioned Ambedkar's full name; so let us look at some information. The date of birth of Ambedkar is April 14, 1891. His native place is Ambavada of Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra. His full name is Bheemrao Ramji Ambedkar. Marathi is the mother tongue. Owing

to his father's job, they shifted from their native place to Bombay. There, Ambedkar passed the matriculation in 1907. Later he completed a B.A. at Bombay in 1912 with the financial help of the Raja of Baroda who used to give scholarships to poor students. As the same Raja extended him help to pursue education abroad, Ambedkar completed his M.A and Ph.D at Columbia University in America. From there he went to London in 1917. His aim was to do Bar-At-Law. As he stopped receiving financial help, he had to return to India without completing his Bar-At-Law. In 1918, he took up a teaching job in a college at Bombay. After two years, with the financial help of the Raja of Kolhapur, he again went to London and did not only his Bar-At-Law but also an M.Sc. Later he studied in Germany for a year. In 1923 he returned to India and started his practice as a lawyer in Bombay.

Since then the anti-Untouchability movements, politics and writings concerning these issues became his central activities. In 1926, he got an appointment as a representative of the Dalits in the Bombay legislative Assembly. This appointment continued upto 1934. Similarly he got an appointment in the department of labour in the Executive of the Governor General in 1942 (to 1946).

After India became 'independent' in August 1947, he got a place in Nehru's cabinet as the law minister. At this stage, the drafting of the Constitution of India began.

The British government decided to give 'freedom' to India and declared in March 1946 that India may form the Constituent Assembly and draft a Constitution.

At that time there were provincial Legislative Assemblies in all the states but there was no central legislative Assembly (Parliament). Now they had to form one. That is a 'Constituent Assembly'. During this period, all the people of India did not have right to vote. Only rich persons, professionals like doctors and lawyers and some people of the upper castes had such a right to vote. Elections to the provincial assemblies used to take place with the participation of one fourth of the country's population in voting. The legislative members whom only one fourth of the population elected have to now elect members of the 'Constituent Assembly'.

Elections to the 'Constituent Assembly' took place in July 1946. On the whole 296 members got elected from all the states. However, of these 296, 96 members came to this Assembly through nomination by virtue of their feudal right as representatives of princely states and not even by the then existing election procedure. The remaining members too included people with various kinds of properties, belonging to upper castes and with higher education.

Ambedkar was one such member. He was able to enter the Constituent Assembly with the support of the Muslim League members of Bengal since he did not get Congress Party's support from his native state, Bombay.

The Constituent Assembly began its meetings from December 9, 1946. Rajendra Prasad was its chairman. (Many things that we are going to see/ cite hereafter are from volume 13 of Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches. This volume includes the draft copy of the Constitution and Ambedkar's speeches relating to the Constitution).

The very first speech that Ambedkar made in the Constituent Assembly on December 17, 1946 proceeded as follows:

> "I know to-day we are divided politically, socially and economically. We are a group of warring camps and I may go even to the extent of confessing that I am probably one of the leaders of such a camp. But, Sir, with all this, I am quite convinced that given time and circumstances nothing in the world will prevent this country from becoming one. (Applause). With all our castes and creeds, I have not the slightest hesitation that we shall in some form be a united people (Cheers). I have no hesitation in saying that notwithstanding the agitation of the Muslim League for the partition of India some day enough light would dawn upon the Muslims themselves and they too will begin to think that a United India is better even for them. (Loud cheers and applause)....I propose to make this appeal. Let us leave aside slogans, let us leave aside words which frighten people. Let us even make a concession to the prejudices of our opponents, bring them in, so that they may willingly join with us on marching upon that road, which as I said, if we walk long enough, must necessarily lead us to unity" (pp: 9-10).

This is a strange speech from Ambedkar! This is a new kind of speech that could satisfy Congress politically and Hindus communally.

All the members of the Constituent Assembly were amazed by Ambedkar's ecstasy over India's independence and by his declaration of sudden unity with Congress because Ambedkar had been repeatedly declaring at the top of his voice that 'social reform like annihilation of caste should take place prior to independence' and 'the independence that India might get would be independence for Hindus and not the low castes'.

Ambedkar's appeal, 'let us be united', sounded to the Congressmen as if Ambedkar was saying, 'hereafter I will unite with you'. Further, Ambedkar was saying, 'I will keep my slogans aside'. Immediately, the clever Chairman of the Constituent Assembly who belonged to the Congress took Ambedkar into two committees connected with the drafting of the Constitution.

However, in the meantime, there arose a problem. Ambedkar lost his membership because earlier he had got elected from Bengal and now Bengal got divided due to the formation of Pakistan.

We don't know what advantage the Congress foresaw in assimilating Ambedkar into their fold. They did not want to lose this member. They asked a Congress member from Bombay to resign and immediately elected Ambedkar in that seat! Ambedkar—who did not get Congress support a couple of months ago in Bombay—did not have any problem now. The Congress fellows took care of everything. How strange is this? How did Ambedkar become such a 'closest-comrade-in-arms' of the Congress? Further, a second strange thing had happened. Ambedkar got a berth in the newly formed Nehru's cabinet. Ambedkar asked for Planning or Labour Ministry but Nehru gave Law ministry saying, 'let us see later'. Now, Ambedkar too has become part of the Congress government.

A few months before that, when Jagjivan Ram got a ministership in the interim government of Nehru before partition, the Federation of Depressed Classes gave a warning to Jagjivan Ram. They told him not to join the cabinet if the depressed classes did not get more representation (more number of ministerships). But Mr. Jagjivan Ram ignored that warning and continued in his ministerial position. The federation of depressed classes, which had earlier warned Jagjivan Ram not to join the government was now satisfied that the depressed classes had got full representation with the induction of Ambedkar into Nehru's cabinet!

Ambedkar's joining the Congress government makes us suspect Ambedkar's honesty a lot. In every speech, or to use a Telugu idiom, 'whenever he opens his mouth', he talks self-respect of depressed castes. But there is no consistency between his words and deeds. It was in June 1945 that Ambedkar wrote his voluminous book (Volume 9) on the atrocities of Congress under the title "What have Congress and Gandhi done for the Untouchables?" What was the reason for setting aside his slogans for the sake of Congress in December 1946 and becoming part of the Congress government by August 1947? What did Congress—which did not do any thing for Untouchables by 1945—do by 1946? Had it done something?

If Ambedkar offers a witty reply that he joined the Congress government but not the Congress party, such a reply is not enough. If the Dalits are in a situation wherein they are convinced by such reply, Ambedkar's action will be accepted as a great deed. Otherwise, It causes intense mental agony in the case of the Dalits who apply their thought.

In the meantime, there occurred a third strange event. Ambedkar got another position because of Congress! On August 29, the Constituent

Assembly elected 7 persons as members of the committee for drafting Constitution and appointed Ambedkar as its Chairman.

The members of the committee were: (1) Alladi Kuppuswami Ayyar (2) N.Gopalaswami Ayyangar (3) Ambedkar (4) K.M.Munshi (5) Syed Mohammed Sadullah (6) R.L. Mitthal (7) D.P. Khaitan.

Ambedkar was the chairman of this committee.

Mr. Vasant Moon who edited all the volumes of Ambedkar, while commenting how Ambedkar raised himself to the highest position said,

> "Dr. Ambedkar, who was a strong opponent of Congress had now become their friend, philosopher and guide in Constitutional matters" (p. 26).

Mr. Vasant Moon does not raise the question how a person who was a strong opponent of the Congress until then had so suddenly become their friend! There is no meaning in his descriptions, namely, 'philosopher and guide' of the Congress. Because, Ambedkar does not have any new philosophy that he can offer to the Congress. Now the philosophies of both the sides became one and the same. Similarly, there is nothing that makes Ambedkar a guide of Congress. In fact Congress itself became a guide of Ambedkar. Hence, all the descriptions of Mr. Vasant Moon are meaningless eulogies.

Once, M.C.Raja, a Dalit leader became pro-Gandhi and pro-Congress and did not support special electorates for the Dalits and said, 'our salvation lies in not segregating ourselves from the Hindus'. Referring to this incident, Ambedkar once criticised Raja that he was doing the work of **"mere hirelings"** of the Congress and wondered why he had developed such a strong love for Gandhi and so on (Vol.5, p. 356).

When the Dalit legislators belonging to the Congress party voted against the Dalit interests in the Madras Assembly, Ambedkar abusingly described them as **"muzzled dogs"** of the Congress (Vol. 5, p. 345).

Is it not by becoming a supporter of the Congress that Ambedkar—who abused the Dalit legislators for becoming pro-Hindus and pro-Congress and for voting against the interests as "mere hirelings" and "muzzled dogs")—got his seat in the Constituent Assembly? Is there any difference between what Raja said (Let us live together with Hindus) and what Ambedkar said (Let us keep our slogans aside and be united!)? It is 'betrayal' if others do it! It is 'service to the nation' if he does it? Is that so? In this manner, Ambedkar kept aside his slogan of 'social reform' and 'Dalit movement' and began his unity and friendship with the Congress.

When we speak of the 'Constitution', it is necessary to examine (1) the way it is drafted and (2) its contents.

The way the 'Constitution of India' was drafted:

The Drafting Committee consisting of 7 members started its work on 27-10-1947. However, the Constitution had been already drafted by that time! The personnel of the office of the Constituent Assembly prepared the draft ready. B.N.Rao, the Constitutional Advisor, S.N. Mukherjee, Draftsman and the personnel of the office of the Constituent Assembly did the whole work. The officers prepared a new Constitution based on the then existing Constitution called the British India Act of 1935. Of the 395 articles in the old Constitution, they retained 250 articles verbatim or with minor modification. In addition to these, they added some points to this new Constitution from the Constitution of other countries. Thus, they had already prepared the 'Draft Constitution'.

Then, what was this 7-member Committee expected to do? The Committee was expected to examine the prepared draft and suggest modifications if necessary. The personnel of the office of the Constituent Assembly were to incorporate these suggestions later.

Satyanarayan Sinha, a member of the Constituent Assembly who proposed this 7-member Committee stated the duties of this committee as follows:

> *"... to scrutinise and to suggest necessary amendments to the draft Constitution of India prepared in the office of the Assembly"* (p. 29).

Referring to the work of the 7-member committee, Vasant Moon also stated that it was engaged in **"discussing and revising"** (p. 44). This means the duty of the committee was to discuss the already existing draft and revise wherever necessary! This is the duty of drafting the Constitution by a 7-member committee! Ambedkar's chairmanship is for this purpose!

The 7-member committee started its work. It has to keep the copy of the draft before it and go through the articles one after the other. It has to retain those articles which it thinks are all right. If it thinks that it should change a word, sentence, or a paragraph, it does so according to the majority opinion and dictates it to the stenographer, who makes a note of it. Later the official draftsman Mukherjee takes care of incorporating the suggested changes. If the committee goes through all the articles in this manner, it amounts to the finalisation of Constitution.

The committee meetings always had a quorum though all members did not attend every meeting. The committee sat on this job from 27-10-1947 to 13-2-1948. The committee handed over the final draft to the president of the Constituent Assembly on 21-2-1948.

In his covering letter to the final draft, Ambedkar informed the

president that "the necessary quorum was present" and "the decisions were either unanimous or by a majority of those present" (p. 95).

In the same letter, Ambedkar expressed

> "the committee's gratitude for the assistance the committee had received in this difficult task from Sir B.N.Rau, the Constitutional Advisor, Shri S.N. Mukherjee, Joint Secretary and Draftsman, and the staff of the Constituent Assembly secretariat" (p. 104).

After this, the draft of the Constitution was published in the Gazette and released it for the public discussion.

After 8 months, discussion on the draft Constitution began in the Constituent Assembly from 4-11-1948.

In his first day speech, Ambedkar praised the draft Constitution finalised by their committee as a **"formidable document"**. He gave the details concerning the number of articles, schedules and chapters and claimed that

> *"the Constitution of no country could be found to be so bulky as the draft Constitution"* (p. 49).

(The 7-member committee under the chairmanship of Ambedkar brought a very great reputation to India preparing such a bulky Constitution which no other country possessed! The world would have felt disappointed if no country had such a bulky Constitution!)

The discussion of the draft Constitution continued for one year in the Constituent Assembly. The members of the Constituent Assembly made some critical comments here and there on some aspects. They suggested some amendments. Some of the amendments were incorporated in the Constitution. Finally, the Constitution received the consent of the Constituent Assembly on 28-11-1949. President Rajendra Prasad signed the document. In this manner, a new Constitution for 'independent' India came into existence. The same Constitution is still in operation in India even today.

So far, we have examined the procedure in which the Constitution was drafted. Now, we have to examine what the contents of the Constitution are.

Contents of the Constitution:

Pages 105 to 317 in volume 13 contain the text of this draft Constitution. Here we will see it very briefly. The Constitution begins as follows:

"WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to

constitutes India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation; IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this____of_____(.....day 15 of May, 1948 A.D.), do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION" (p. 105).

'Social, economic and political justice, liberty, fraternity, unity—all these words are simply jargon! Just as priests fluently recite the most useless 'Mantras' in a religious ritual, all this jargon of the Constitution too is a useless recitation of empty words!

Who were the people who drafted and discussed this Constitution? They were the members of Constituent Assembly, weren't they? Whom did these members represent? By what sort of elections had they entered the Constituent Assembly? They entered through an election process in which one fourth of the population did not possess the right to vote. Nearly 100 members were Zamindars (feudal lords) who entered the Assembly without any sort of elections. Will it be a Constitution of people when such members discussed and accepted it? Is this a Constitution which all the people of India voluntarily adopted?

Is Ambedkar not aware of all this? He knows pretty well. This gentleman, who always talks of democracy or to use a Telugu idiom, who always talks of democracy 'whenever he opens his mouth', is now not bothered about the undemocratic nature of the composition of the Constituent Assembly.

The question is not whether a given Constitution is bulky or thin. What does it say about 'property' and 'labour'? This is the important question. We have to mainly note such things.

The Constitution which we are going to see consists of many parts.

Reference to 'property' is in part 3. Whereas there is no reference at all at any place to 'labour'.

We have to examine these parts briefly:

Part 1: This contains the Indian union, its territory and its jurisdiction. India is a union of states. 'State' means any kind of administrative unit: it may be ruled by a government or a chief commissioner. Parliament, by means of laws, can change the names and borders of the states. It may either increase or decrease the number of states.

Part 2: Citizenship. Every person will acquire citizenship either because of birth, permanent residence or succession.

Part 3: Fundamental Rights: All citizens will have all rights of equality in all spheres of life. The State (government) will not discriminate against individuals on the ground of religion, race, caste or gender. All citizens have equal rights and use common resources and public places. Nothing prevents the State from making provision for the reservations of appointments or posts in State services in favour of the backward class of citizens. (p. 110).

➢ Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. It is an offence punishable in accordance with law (p. 110).

➢ The state should not confer any title on any citizen. The citizens of India should not confer any title on any citizen. The citizens of India should not accept the titles from the foreign governments, unless the President permits (p. 110).

(There are no details as to why titles are forbidden. Yet this is a very good thing. Then why do they have Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Bharath Ratna and so on. Do Constitution and titles go their own way?)

➢ All citizens have a right to freedom of speech and expression. They also have the right to assemble peacefully without arms, to form associations or unions, to live anywhere in the country, to practise any religion and to form any religious institutions.

➢ There should be a provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens who are not adequately represented in the state services. (This is item 3 of Article 10, on p. 110. There are no details with reference to the number of years for which these reservations should continue). However, there is an explanation concerning the seats in the legislative assemblies in Article 305 of Part 16 on p. 254. "...the provisions of this Constitution relating to the reservation of seats for the Muslims, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled tribes or the Indian Christians either in Parliament or in the Legislature of any State for the first time being specified in Part I of the First Schedule shall not be amended during a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution and shall cease to have effect on the expiration of that period unless continued in operation by an amendment of the Constitution" (p. 254). There are no details other than these in the Constitution pertaining to reservations).

➢ There are rights to own, acquire, retain or sell property and to pursue any occupation. The State has no right, except by law, to take away

the property of any person. The State cannot take away property—movable (land), immovable, a company, a business firm or property in any other form without paying compensation. Even the religious institutions have the right to own movable and immovable properties (pp: 113-15).

➢ The Parliament can decide by law whether to restrict or abrogate these rights with reference to the armed forces.

With this, Part 3 ends. Though there are many more parts in the Constitution, its entire essence is clear from part 3.

This Constitution protects the right to property. It does not make any distinction between property based on one's labour or property based on exploitation. It treats every kind of property as a holy thing! It is more holy if it is property based on exploitation! Its aim is to protect such property. Individuals can own movable or immovable properties. They can receive rent, interest and profit. This Constitution defends and sustains all these rights of exploitative property that have been there since the past!

No one should take any property without compensation to the owner. According to this rule, we can't touch lands, plantations, industries, money capital and everything that foreign rulers acquired in this country. Similarly, we can't touch estates of feudal lords consisting of thousands of acres of land. Likewise we can't touch any land or any industry of native capitalists either. Which means, this Constitution pleases capitalists: both native and foreign and landlords! In that case, what is the meaning of the phrase 'equality to all persons in all spheres of life'? How do all persons attain economic equality? This means, they are saying, 'acquire property if you can! Who prevented you? The Constitution is giving that right to every one'. This means, they have given the right to exploit to all equally! This is equality!

Ambedkar came forward with great joy or to use a Telugu expression "to put both his hands" in this work of preparing such a Constitution.

After mentioning that 'practice of Untouchability is an offence punishable under law', the State brought the Act prohibiting Untouchability in 1954. That is 5 years after the finalisation of the Constitution. It took so much time to provide a safeguard for the protection of low caste people! No example other than this is necessary to prove that equality cited in the Constitution is false.

Part 4: Directive Principles:

The State may implement these principles which the Constitution has laid down. It need not implement these principles if it is not possible. These are not rules. These are only guidelines. If the State implements them, the

Constitution framers will be happy. If the State does not implement them, they will feel much happier.

Those sermons are the following:

➢ "The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people" (Aha! Who are the people? Are the capitalists: native and foreign people? Now it is clear. Yes, the State has to keep their welfare in view, doesn't it?)

➢ Men and women have the right to get a livelihood. Ownership and control over material resources of society should be useful for the common good. (Private individuals can possess property rights over material resources; whereas those material resources should be useful for the common good! How wittily draft committee members speak!)

➢ Men and women should get equal wage for equal work. There should be humane conditions of work. There should be a uniform civil code. The State should protect young persons and children from exploitation. (No explanation of what exploitation is! But they talk of protection from exploitation!)

The Constitution gave indescribable Sermons in this part to the State that it should keep all these matters in view.

Part 5: In this part, there is a reference to adult suffrage and the information indicates that they have introduced the right to vote. This, they should have mentioned in part 3 where there is a reference to Fundamental Rights. But there we don't find any reference to this right (of Adult Suffrage).

From Part 6: There is nothing to examine specifically. Hereafter everything is concerned exclusively with powers. Who will elect the President and the Vice-President at the Centre? What are their duties, powers, tenure and salaries? Similarly, about the Attorney General and Speaker as well. How many houses will the Parliament consist of? How many times those houses will meet in a year? Elections, Conducting the houses, Quorum, Privileges of the house, Qualifications of the members, Procedure to introduce Bills, Annual Budget, Auditing, Supreme Court and its rights, Appointment of Judges—Thus, information concerning Centre is over.

After this, information concerning the States. Then the Centre-States relations, their assets, income, debts, Central-State services, Courts...In this manner, hundreds of pages continue with these details until Part 17 ends. With this the Constitution comes to an end.

In the whole of the Constitution, abolition of Untouchability and Adult

Suffrage are the two noteworthy points. There is nothing special worth talking about the remaining points.

It is beyond the imagination of this Constitution to talk about 'performance of labour by every person'.

This is totally an orthodox ('Sanatan') Constitution. Which means, it is such a Constitution which was born during the period of Slavery and which continues exploitative rights. This Constitution adopted verbatim the same laws which the British imperialists—who occupied the country as their colony—formulated in order to carry on their rule smoothly. The only thing that has changed is the political leaders.

The fact that the same imperialist laws are useful to an *independent* country proves that there is no difference between the imperialists and the rulers of this country, that the interests of both sides are the same and that all of them aim at exploiting the Working Class in the name of property rights.

If we look at the Constituent Assembly—which adopted this Constitution—from a class perspective, all the members of the Constituent Assembly belong to the same class. They included devotees who kneel down before the British imperialism, native feudal lords, political 'rightists', Communalists, agents of propertied class and such others. All of them have proposed the Constitution of their choice.

No skill, or any creativity was necessary to either prepare this Constitution or to scrutinise this draft. The language of the courts was enough to do this job! There is no scope for using poetic talent in such activity. Even if you assign this work to ordinary clerks, they can do it easily. In fact, it was these clerks who did the entire work before and after the scrutiny of the draft Constitution.

Many people think that Ambedkar did this work of drafting the Constitution single handily. They think so because they don't know the fact. It is surprising to note that even those people like Vasant Moon who know the facts also praise Ambedkar. Mr. Moon described that Ambedkar has engraved this statue of the Constitution with great creativity. On the title page of the 13th volume which contains information about the draft Constitution, Mr. Moon has described Ambedkar as 'the principal architect'. In fact, there is no architecture here. Examining some thing that already exists is not tantamount to architecture.

1) This Constitution is a grand "Structure of Political Democracy": Ambedkar

After the conclusion of discussions and petty and witty amendments of the draft Constitution in the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar gave a very long speech in his capacity as the chairman of the draft committee on 25-11-1949 (pp: 1206-18. Most of the things that follow are in a condensed form).

At the outset, Ambedkar expressed his happiness because all the members of the Constituent Assembly except one member appreciated with generous expressions the labour which the draft committee put in.

He claimed that he entered the Constituent Assembly not with any other hope except to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes. *(Does any one safeguard the interests of Scheduled Castes by means of a Constitution that exploits Scheduled Castes? Moreover, that safeguarding is done by keeping aside all the slogans of the Scheduled Castes! If Ambedkar had entered this Assembly only to protect the interests of the low castes, what was the need to keep their slogans aside?)*

Then, he repeatedly expressed his gratitude to the Constituent Assembly:

> "As to the compliments that have been showered upon me both by the members of the Assembly as well as by my colleagues of the Drafting Committee I feel so overwhelmed that I cannot find adequate words to express fully my gratitude to them. I came into the Constituent Assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes. I had not the remotest idea that I would be called upon to undertake these responsible functions. I was therefore greatly surprised when the Assembly elected me to the Drafting Committee. I was more than surprised when the Drafting Committee elected me to be its Chairman. There were in the Drafting Committee men bigger, better and more competent than myself such as my friend Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar. I am grateful to the Constituent Assembly and the Drafting Committee for reposing in me so much trust and confidence and to have chosen me as their instrument and given me this opportunity of serving the country" (*Cheers.*) (p. 1208)

(Would it not be possible to serve the country if he had no position of the chairman of the drafting committee? Well, this means, what the remaining 6 members in the committee did was not serving the country! Nowhere did he explain what 'serving the country' means. Does 'serving the country' mean drafting a Constitution that served a particular class? Now the matter is clear! This means, Ambedkar is overwhelmed with joy for serving the exploitative class!)

Later, Ambedkar expressed his gratitude to the office of the Constituent Assembly who prepared the draft initially.

> "The credit that is given to me does not really belong to me. It belongs partly to Sir B.N.Rau, the Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly who prepared a rough draft of the Constitution for the consideration of the Drafting Committee who, as I have said, have sat for 141 days and without whose ingenuity to devise new formulae and capacity to tolerate and to accommodate different points of view, the task of framing the Constitution could not have come to do successful a conclusion. Much greater share of the credit must go to Mr. S.N. Mukherjee, the Chief Draftsman of the Constitution. His ability to put the most intricate proposals in the simplest and clearest legal form can rarely be equalled, nor his capacity for hard work. He has been acquisition to the Assembly. Without his help, this Assembly would have taken many more years to finalise the Constitution. I must not omit to mention the members of the staff working under Mr. Mukherjee, for, I know how hard they have worked and how long they have toiled, sometimes even beyond midnight. I want to thank them all for their effort and their co-operation." (*Cheers.*) (pp: 1208-9).

(If so many parts of the 'credit' go to so many people, what remains for the chairman? Strangely, it seems a lot of it still remains!)

Thereafter, praise for the Congress Party began.

> "The task of the Drafting Committee would have been a very difficult one if this Constituent Assembly has been merely a motley crowd, a tessellated pavement without cement, a black stone here and a white stone there in which each member or each group was a law unto itself. There would have been nothing but chaos. This possibility of chaos was reduced to nil by the existence of the Congress Party inside the Assembly which brought into its proceedings a sense of order and discipline. It is because of the discipline of the Congress Party that the Drafting Committee was able to pilot the Constitution in the Assembly with the sure knowledge as to the fate of each article and each amendment. The Congress Party is, therefore, entitled to all the credit for the smooth sailing of the Draft Constitution in the Assembly" (p. 1209).

(Shares of all persons mentioned above evaporate because now every thing goes to Congress Party!)

So far, Ambedkar has praised the presence of discipline in the Congress Party, hasn't he? Now look at another side of it! Now he is praising the absence of discipline in the Congress Party!

> "The proceedings of this Constituent Assembly would have been very dull if all members had yielded to the rule of party discipline. Party

discipline, in all its rigidity, would have converted this Assembly into a gathering of 'yes' men. Fortunately, there were rebels. They were Mr. Kamath, Dr. P.S. Deshmukh, Mr. Sidhva, Prof. Saxena and Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava. Along with them I must mention Prof. K.T.Shah and Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru" (p. 1209).

(This means, rebels in the Congress Party are far better than Ambedkar who was not a rebel! They had at least made some criticism.)

"The points they raised were mostly ideological. That I was not prepared to accept their suggestions, does not diminish the value of their suggestions nor lessen the service they have rendered to the Assembly in enlivening its proceedings. I am grateful to them. But for them, I would not have had the opportunity which I got for expounding the principles underlying the Constitution" (p. 1209).

Next, the showers of praise turned to the President. Ambedkar declared with great obedience that he must thank the President for the courtesy and the consideration which he had shown to the members of the Assembly and this he can never forget.

After closing this scene of flooding the Congress Party with praises, he began to enact the scene of criticising Communists and Socialists. Here Communists mean 'Marx-ists'. There is no clarity who these Socialists are. Ambedkar's complaint was that these Communists and Socialists were carelessly criticising this great Constitution which was possible because of the wonderful discipline of the Congress Party. He did not mention a single point of their criticism. Without mentioning anything, he began to accuse them.

"The condemnation of the Constitution largely comes from two quarters, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Why do they condemn the Constitution? Is it because it is really a bad Constitution? I venture to say 'no'." (p. 1210).

(Ambedkar has learnt pretty well how to undertake great ventures under the shade of Congress Party).

"The Communist Party wants a Constitution based upon the principle of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. They condemn the Constitution because it is based upon parliamentary democracy" (p. 1210).

(Did the Communist Party say this? Ambedkar has imagined something of his own and commenting the same without mentioning the criticism which that party made).

The Socialists are criticising this Constitution, according to Ambedkar, because they should have freedom in the Constitution to nationalise or

socialise the entire private property without any compensation. But there is no such freedom in this Constitution. Hence, the Socialists are opposing this Constitution.

Did those Socialists—whoever they may be—show this reason? Ambedkar has not cited their words either. He says that Communists and Socialists are opposing this Constitution because it does not permit them to introduce changes of their choice if they come to power in future! Aha! How to eulogise this intellect? Or to use a Telugu expression, with how many mouths should we eulogise this intellect?

Can't those—who come to power in the future—draft the Constitution of their choice? Haven't the Congress people drafted the Constitution by changing to some extent the then existing Constitution? Will the parties—who subscribe to revolutionary theory that aims at the confiscation of properties of exploiters without confiscation—think whether or not the existing Constitution permit them? If it so happens that they come to power, they would at once tear this Constitution of exploitative rights into pieces and draft a fresh Constitution in accordance with their theory. Whatever ideological group that comes to power, it will formulate a Constitution that suits its ideology. It does not depend on the Constitution of others. Didn't this great Constitutional expert know such a small point as this?

The reason for the criticism of this Congress Constitution by Communists and Socialists might not be the same as Ambedkar is attributing, namely, 'This Constitution will not be useful to us'. This reason is totally meaningless. They might have criticised the then existing conditions. Ambedkar did not give a single point of their criticism except accusing them!

For a Constitutional expert—who stood in the bourgeois Constituent Assembly amidst big princes and capitalists, who put on his shoulders the responsibility of defending their exploitative property rights and—who was overwhelmed by the happy feeling that he was serving the country of princes and capitalists—, it is very natural to become extremely furious at the very thought that there are people who think of confiscating properties of princes and capitalists without compensation. The same thing had happened in the case of Ambedkar. That is why, this friend of the bourgeoisie became so furious at Communists and Socialists!

Ambedkar's speech is not yet over. It is going on and on following the tune of lawyers and bourgeois political tactics. But Ambedkar too hesitated a little because he thought that it would be treacherous to defend the property rights of bourgeoisie and their Constitution even after the world had heard the term 'exploitation of labour'. Hence, this lawyer, in order

to be free from the crime suddenly changed the tune of his speech as follows:

> "I do not say that the principle of parliamentary democracy is the only ideal form of political democracy. I do not say that the principle of no acquisition of private property without compensation is so sacrosanct that there can be no departure from it. I do not say that fundamental Rights can never be absolute and the limitations set upon them can never be lifted. What I do say is that the principles embodied in the Constitution are the views of the present generation or if you think this to be an over-statement. I say these are the views of the members of the Constituent Assembly. Why blame the Drafting Committee for embodying them in the Constitution? I say why blame even the Members of the Constituent Assembly?" (p. 1211).

'Why blame the Constituent Assembly', asks Ambedkar! All the members of the Constituent Assembly are defenders of property rights! Yet we should not criticise the Constituent Assembly! This is how a person who claims that his objective is to protect Scheduled Castes speaks! Moreover, it also means Ambedkar is exhibiting too much innocence and asking thus: 'we have done whatever the Constituent Assembly asked us to do. Why do you blame us?'

But he won't do if he doesn't like that job even if others ask him, would he? He did the job which the Constituent Assembly assigned to him willingly and overwhelmingly. He didn't do it against his will under compulsion, did he? Precisely for this reason we blame him!

The Constituent Assembly, the Drafting Committee and Ambedkar—these are not different aspects. All are the same. All people are one. Our criticism is against all those who did that job together and willingly! Those who do not agree with that Constitution have the right to criticise the Constitution and its makers.

Next, Ambedkar had also started another argument: 'now the Constitution is so because of the views of the present members of the Constituent Assembly. If the people of the next generation want to change it let them do so, we are not saying that this should not be changed and it should be retained as it is forever.

It is a different matter whether the people of the next generation change it or they too retain the same Constitution. The present criticism is against this Constituent Assembly. 'Not doing some thing that has to be done now itself and telling the people of the next generation to do whatever they want' later —implies that the present generation is evading its present duty and throwing it on to the next generation. In other words,

the people of the present generation are saying, 'we want exploitative rights only'! Hence the criticism is against the members of the Constituent Assembly!

Ambedkar thinks that his argument, namely, 'Constitution is so because of the views of the present members of Constituent Assembly', is very strong and he was able to present such a great argument. The critics of the Constitution do not object to the views of feudal lords and capitalists. The critics know that they hold such views. The whole criticism here is because Ambedkar too holds similar views.

Should views of feudal lords, capitalists and Ambedkar be identical? Shouldn't there be any difference?

This gentleman claims that he is the representative of the Depressed Classes! He is a person who claims that the realisation of the interests of the Scheduled Castes is his goal! He is the person who declared such grand schemes as 'safeguards from economic exploitation' and 'State Socialism'! He is the person who vehemently argued that his schemes should be implemented within 10 years after attaining independence and that his schemes would result in liberty, equality and fraternity in society! Why did such a person abandon all his objectives, slogans, schemes and enter the Constituent Assembly of the propertied classes? For what purpose did he adopt the view of the propertied class as his own? What is the answer to these questions? 'If the people of the next generation want to change the Constitution, they can change it'—Is this an answer?

Ambedkar prepared his scheme of 'safeguards from economic exploitation' in March 1947 with a view to present to the Constituent Assembly (Vol. 1, p. 383). But the Constituent Assembly rejected his scheme. This means, while the Constituent Assembly rejected Ambedkar's scheme, Ambedkar accepted the scheme of the Constituent Assembly.

We have already seen earlier the contents of Ambedkar's scheme. It is a scheme that simply transforms the forms of property. Ambedkar prepared at least such a scheme because agricultural labourers were waging struggles to occupy the lands of landlords in China as well as in India in places like Telangana. In such an atmosphere, it would sound ridiculous if he did not refer to 'properties' while talking about safe guards for the poor. Hence, he discovered that kind of scheme!

When the Constituent Assembly rejected his scheme, what should a person have done if his scheme is his goal? He has to undertake programmes of defending and propagating his own scheme among the people. But what Ambedkar did was not to mention it again! Never did he raise the topic again!

Thereafter, he quickly became a minister in the Congress government and the Chairman of the Drafting Committee or to use a Telugu metaphor, the minister-ship and the chairmanship 'fell in love' with Ambedkar. Thenceforth, Ambedkar abandoned his scheme of 'safeguards from economic exploitation' and with great joy immersed in the programme of decorating the Constitution that safeguards 'economic exploitation' and was overwhelmed with joy for he got an opportunity to do service for the country! His scheme of safeguards was not useful in any way except to decorate his collected works after his death.

We don't ask other members of the Constituent Assembly the kind of questions which we asked Ambedkar, namely, 'why should you do that? Why did you do this?' It is because the other members didn't declare any ideals such as, 'safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Castes' is my goal!' or 'liberty, equality and fraternity are my objectives!' and so on. They did not take any vehement oaths. Since he himself declared those ideals repeatedly even in the Constituent Assembly, we put these questions to Ambedkar.

Ambedkar opposed the criticism against the Constitution so vehemently that no form of logic was left unused by him. In Canada, he says, people did not at all have the right to amend their Constitution! Whereas in America and Australia, it is not possible to touch the Constitution except under extraordinary circumstances! But it is not so in India! In India, it is enough if a certain majority of votes are secured in the parliament in order to amend the Constitution. Is there any Constitution anywhere in the world which can be so easily amended? It has the most facile procedure for amending the Constitution. We have not put a seal of finality and infallibility upon the Constitution by denying to the people the right to amend the Constitution. If you want to amend it, get a majority of votes and then amend it'—This is how he argued a lot.

(Here, there is a doubt about the present day Dalit leaders! Ambedkar himself categorically stated that if the majority of the members of the Parliament are willing to amend the Constitution, there is a provision in the Constitution, there is a provision in the Constitution itself to do so, didn't he state it? Then why do Dalit leaders now say that 'the government should not touch the Constitution and can not amend it'? What is the correct method? Examining the proposed amendments or arguing not to touch the Constitution? Don't these leaders know any of the Ambedkar's descriptions of the Constitution of how facile and flexible it is?)

Ambedkar also hurled a terrifying challenge at his critics concerning the speciality of the Constitution of India:

"I challenge any of the critics of the Constitution to prove that any Constituent Assembly anywhere in the world has, in the circumstances in which this country finds itself, provided such a facile procedure for the amendment of the Constitution" (p. 1211-12).

After Ambedkar answered all kinds of criticism against the Constitution with his astounding arguments, the remaining part of his speech projected a scene in which Ambedkar expressed his heartfelt grief, 'will India maintain her independence or will she lose it again?'

Ambedkar repeatedly said that the question of the country's independence is causing him anxiety and that his mind is crowded with these doubts. This oratory scene proceeds as follows:

"...in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost for ever. This eventuality we must all resolutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood. (*Cheers.*) On the 26th of January 1950, India would be a democratic country in the sense that India from that day would have a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The same thought comes to my mind. What would happen to her democratic Constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again. This is the second thought that comes to my mind and makes me anxious as the first" (p. 1214).

After this, for a while, Ambedkar praised Buddha's democracy and the democracy of the Hindu kings of that time.

Were caste distinctions not observed in those Hindu kingdoms? Ambedkar had so many doubts whether India would maintain her Independence or lose it. Why didn't he get the doubt, 'what do you mean by democracy under monarchy?' What is this, why are Hindu kings so loveable in the view of Ambedkar now?

In his capacity as the chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambedkar expressed an indescribable agony. Here again he was worried a lot if this country loses again the democracy that it received from the Constitution which the drafting Committee finalised.

Look, all this anxiety of Ambedkar is about the greatest democracy which was formulated by those members who were elected by means of an electoral system in which even one-fourth people don't have the right to vote and by the feudal lords who did not face even such nominal elections!

He raised the question of 'how to maintain this democracy?' and he himself answered, 'we should hold fast to the Constitutional methods'. He said that "we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution".

(All these persons have membership in the Constituent Assembly. Some have ministerships and even bigger positions. It is needless to talk about lands and capital that they possess. Then how are these gentlemen connected with revolution? Therefore let there be no 'revolution'!)

He further said that it is better to give up as early as possible the anarchic methods like civil disobedience, non-Cooperation and Satyagraha.

No revolution! No Satyagraha! Everybody should act as per law, according to the laws in the Constitution because he and other members gave such a great Constitution. Don't violate it!

This means, Dalits do not need any movements and any programme of struggle against the State! All that they have to do is service to the Constitution! That is, service to the propertied class.

Ambedkar's speech proceeded further as follows:

> "On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality which means elevation for some and degradation for others. On the economic plane, we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty" (p. 1216).

Mr. Ambedkar, what will these people with abject poverty do with the political equality ('All are equal before law!') that all of you declared in the pages of the Constitution.

Ambedkar's sermon to feudal lords, industrialists and politicians who sat in the Constituent Assembly proceeded further as follows:

> "How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so labouriously built up....These down-trodden classes are tired of being governed, they are impatient to govern themselves. This urge for self-realization in the downtrodden classes must not be allowed to develop into a class struggle or class war. It would lead to a division of the House. That would indeed be a day of disaster. For, as has been well said by Abraham Lincoln, a house divided against itself cannot stand very long. Therefore the sooner room is made for the realization of their aspiration, the better for the few, the better for the country, the better

for the maintenance for its independence and the better for the continuance of its democratic structure. This can only be done by the establishment of equality and fraternity in all spheres of life. That is why I have laid so much stress on them" (pp: 1216-18).

Ambedkar's speech is not yet over. It is clear what Ambedkar emphasised in the Constituent Assembly, isn't it? Ambedkar is warning the Constituent Assembly that as the majority people in the country are living in 'abject poverty', the State should establish economic and social equality and if it is not done, the people will resort to 'class struggles' and we should not allow such a thing to happen.

Well, what should the Constituent Assembly do for the downtrodden classes? What is Ambedkar's intention? Should all the rich people in India distribute their property to the poor? It is not there in the Constitution. They need not give up their property without compensation. Well, at least, should all persons begin to perform labour? This is also not there in the Constitution. Moreover, this is something which Ambedkar doesn't like at all. Then what should the Constituent Assembly do for economic and social equality? How can these contradictions be eradicated? Ambedkar did not offer the members of the Constituent Assembly any suggestion like, 'give up your property rights', or 'all persons should perform labour' or any other suggestion.

Did he at least show a path to the people? Not at all. According to Ambedkar's philosophy people have nothing to do for themselves even if they live in abject poverty. They should not resort to 'class struggle' in any form. They should not resort to *Satyagraha* either. Everybody should follow the laws mentioned in the Constitution! It is the class of owners who made those laws! Those laws tell the labourers not to look at the property of the employers. Then how do people get rid of the abject poverty? Ambedkar has not suggested any solution to this problem.

It follows that, in order to get rid of poverty, people have to do nothing; the Constituent Assembly has to do nothing and even Ambedkar too has to do nothing! (God is the only creature that is left! We have to search where that guy is!)

Anyone, who feels really sorry for the poverty of people will try to find out the cause for the poverty. As soon as they hear about the theory of 'exploitation of labour', they will at once agree with it. They would realise that confiscation of means of production from the hands of the class of employers without compensation is the right solution. From that moment of realization, they begin to preach people the objective of class struggle. But Ambedkar opposes this totally. Nowhere did he support the struggle against the property rights of the employers. Not only did he not support

it, he opposed it at every step. He repeatedly preached to the people that the best way for the poor people is to follow Constitution and they should not act contrary to the laws. Whereas for the propertied classes in the Constituent Assembly, he cautioned that the 'downtrodden classes may take the path of class struggle! You should not allow that!'

But Ambedkar had some hesitation and despair though he was speaking with confidence, standing amidst the property owners in the Constituent Assembly. He was surprised a lot to note that 'times are fast changing'.

He said:

> "Times are fast changing. People including our own are being moved by new ideologies" (p. 1218).

This is to say that people not only in foreign countries but also in our country are influenced by Marxism!

Now the last sentences in the speech:

> "...let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to government by the people, nor to be weak in our initiative to remove them. That is the only way to serve the country. I know of no better" (p. 1218).

In the entire speech, the last sentence alone is beautiful!

This sentence is totally true!

Ambedkar really does not know anything better than that. If he had a better idea, the history of Ambedkar and the history of the struggle of the Dalits would have been much better than it is now.

If Ambedkar knew that the welfare of the Dalits and membership in the Constituent Assembly are not consistent, he would not have said so unhesitatingly that he entered the Constituent Assembly for the welfare of Dalits. Instead of standing amidst people and telling them, 'let us get rid of our poverty and servitude by means of class struggle', he would not have stood in the Constituent Assembly and told, 'let us be careful and see that people do not resort to class struggle'.

'I know of no better'—though this is something that Ambedkar said merely with conventional modesty, he in fact does not know what is better.

After Ambedkar concluded his speech, all the members of the Constituent Assembly flooded Ambedkar with praises. They called him 'modern Manu'. Just as Manu's law is 'Manu Smriti', Ambedkar's Constitution is 'Mahar Smriti'. ('Mahar' is the name of the caste of

Ambedkar, hence they called his Constitution 'Mahar Smriti'! It seems this appeared as a compliment to Ambedkar too! Nowhere did he reject these terms).

A member named Thakur Das Bhargava advised Ambedkar to join the Congress Party. (Does Ambedkar have to join the Congress formally? It seems Bhargava was innocent or to use a Telugu metaphor, 'it was madness' on the part of Bhargava. Is Ambedkar's "closer contact" with Congress not tantamount to having joined Congress already?)

Whereas Ananthasayanam Ayyangar made a beautiful analysis of Ambedkar:

> "The very person who came to doubt and to criticise has ultimately taken charge of this Constitution and framed it. I congratulate ourselves for the goodwill shown to him and the manner in which he has reciprocated it. After all, by closer contact we can easily understand one another's view point" (p. 1167).

This means Congress Party had cleverly took Ambedkar closer to them! Similarly, Ambedkar too demonstrated cleverness in coming 'closer' to Congress!

All the clever men came close to each other and understood each other well!

It is only the people who did not understand the two.

2) Military in Telangana

Do you know what was happening in the country 'outside the Constituent Assembly' while the days were passing leisurely with *delicate* debates on the Constitution?

The rural poor engaged in agriculture in Telangana, Andhra, Kerala, Bengal, Panjab, Uttar Pradesh and some more places were waging struggles, under the leadership of the Communist Party, for occupying the lands of the landlords.

If we take the example of Telangana, Mr. **P. Sundarayya's** book, TELANGANA PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE AND ITS LESSONS (a CPIM publication in December 1972) gives a vivid and visual description.

In Telangana villages, tenant-farmers and agricultural labourers began revolts against feudalism. Among them, poor Hindus and Untouchables were present. They stopped all the payments connected with compulsory free labour and compulsory presents to the landlords. The poor people began to confiscate the stocks of grain of big landlords and distribute it

among themselves. They dumped and set fire to the records of Patels and Patwaris (Village officials), the records of the landlords, promissory notes crowded in the almirahs of the money lenders. Finally, with the slogan of 'land to the tiller', they began to distribute the lands of landlords. Initially, they left 500 acres of land to each landlord's family and distributed the remaining land. But gradually, they left 10 if it was wet land and 100 acres if it was dry land. These revolutionary activities began to spread to other districts as well (pp: 58-59).

The landlords, who were terrified due to the activities of the poor people, left the villages and fled to towns.

"The anti-Razakar, anti-the Nizam armed struggle developed in the Telangana area rapidly; village squads with about 10,000 members and regular guerilla squads with more than 2,000 members were formed; innumerable struggles, heroic deeds, nearly 2,000 militants, fighters and leaders laying down their lives but taking a heavy toll of the Nizam's armed personnel, police agents, Razakars, landlords and their goondas; driving them away from villages; 3,000 villages administered by village panch committees or gram rajyams; land distribution, education and health, and all rural services organised by these fighting people's committees" (p. 60).

This is a small example to understand the difference between Ambedkar's path (paying debentures, interest and inheritance) and the Communist path of struggle against 'exploitation'.

The 'Nehru-Patel Government' (it was also Ambedkar's government since Ambedkar too was a minister in that government), under the pretext of annexing the Nizam, sent 50 thousand soldiers into the Telangana villages in September 1948 in order to suppress the people's revolt.

The Nizam surrendered to the Indian government without any resistance. Then the objective of the Indian army was to suppress the people. Which means, destroying guerrilla squads, the Communist Party organisation and the Village Committees.

Ambedkar, who was a part of the government, knew every thing: why the Indian Army had proceeded to the Telangana villages and what it was going to do there.

"The Congress military regime in Hyderabad, the police, military and the Congress Razakars had let loose vandalism, terror and fascism on an unprecedented scale with a view to crushing the heroic struggle of the people of Telangana" (p. 197).

"Military camps were erected all over fighting areas in Telangana at every 4th or 5th mile. Twice or thrice a day, villages around these camps

were raided by the military and the people were systematically tortured. People in every village were herded at a place and brutally beaten. They forced the people to accompany them through forests, gardens, hills, etc., in search of Communists and compelled them to give information. When they could not find anyone in the search, people were again beaten" (p.198).

"...people were tied to ropes and drawn up and suddenly dropped to the ground with a pulley system (like the one used to draw water from wells). Men were tied in gunny bags and soldiers threw them over a wall from one side to the other. —Some soldiers caught hold of the arms and some others the legs of the people and swung them while some others kicked those swinging men with their nailed boots like foot-balls are kicked. —People en masse were made to lie down in the sand under the hot sun and were beaten. Some were tied to tree-tops upside down and were swung, and at the end of each swing, were beaten. Some were made to lie face downwards, a wooden plank placed on their back, two soldiers got on it at each end, and swayed and danced. —Pins were thrust under finger-nails; branding bodies with red-hot firewood or iron was a common feature. People were also tortured with the electric current. —...Hundreds of people used to be severely beaten up and made to run in front of running lorries. Whoever could not run ahead of lorries were tied behind lorries and dragged" (p. 198).

"Rangayya of Chandupalli was tied to a cart and burnt alive. He died shouting, "Communist Party Zindabad" (p. 200).

"Ramulu was caught in an encirclement raid at Miryala (Suryapet taluka). Failing to get any secrets from him, he was tied to a lorry and dragged on the road until his body was torn to bits" (p. 200).

"Muthayya of Visnur and Appireddy of Kalmalacheruvu were burnt alive in hayricks" (p. 200).

""Ganji Satyanarayana of Malkapuram, squad leader and Harijan Muthayya, had their eyes gouged out, testicles cut and thrust into their mouths, and later hacked to pieces" (p. 200).

"Yellaswamy of Nomula village coming from an agricultural labour family,....was subjected to innumerable torture—pieces of flesh were cut from his body, nails were hammered into him, he was branded with red hot iron; still he refused to reveal secrets and was shot dead ultimately (p. 201).

"Needless to talk especially about atrocities on women. They raped women who recently gave birth to children, pregnant women and young girls. More than 1,000 women were raped during the first year and a few thousands during the whole period. Because a number of brutes raping

women in a row, more than 100 women died. —Women's breasts were pulled and crushed with iron forceps, and babies were killed before the very eyes of their mothers. —70 women were stripped naked, chameleons tied to their thighs and chilly powder thrown into the wounds."

(pp: 199-200).

Innumerable incidents of murders, burning alive, burying alive and massacres took place.

In Allampalli camp, Palvancha taluka, in one day in September, 45 were shot dead among whom 18 were party members. Butchery continued and within 4 days 119 were killed. In this camp, it is estimated that more than 300 were killed (p. 201).

"In Gadipadu and other camps established for Koya people evacuated from the forests, within two months, about 10,000 people died of cholera. Police shot dead 120 persons to force them evacuate their villages" (p.201).

Soldiers unleashed terror in thousands of villages of Nalgonda, Warangal, Khammam, Karimnagar and Hyderabad.

Military committed many atrocities in the present day Andhra districts which are border districts of Telangana.

"In Krishna district, the people's movement in support of Telangana became intensified. The mass of agricultural labour, in more than 400 villages, were preparing for strike struggles to win their demands. Their demands were 30 bags of paddy, 8-hour working day and 30 paid holidays. The peasants in the zamindari tracts refused to pay rent to zamindars and demanded that their rent be scaled down and the zamindari system be abolished" (p. 152).

If these demands had been achieved, even the untouchables, who were agricultural labourers, too would have benefited a lot.

Even the Congress leaders could not resist themselves from exposing the terror unleashed by the Army that attacked Andhra villages.

"Sri Vemula Kurmayya, farmer Congress Minister for Harijan Uplift, member, Madras Legislative Assembly, issued a statement on the shameless police atrocities in the village of Yelamarru, an extract from which is given hereunder: "Before day-break on 14th July, 1949, 200 Malabar Special Police raided the village of Yelamarru. They surrounded the village and did not allow anybody to leave. After daybreak, they gathered the villagers in three batches in the local high school compound. They stripped them naked and each was given ten stripes. Then, they forced the villagers to parade throughout the village, in their nakedness ! When some tried to hide their shame with their hands, they were beaten again. Some of them

were made to lie prostrate before the Gandhi statue and were given more blows. Even after this, the clothes were not returned but they were asked to go home and appear before their womenfolk naked and to come back attired on new clothes. Both untouchables and touchables were among the people who were subjected to this atrocious humiliation and beating.—All the women in the Harijan colony were made to stand in the maidan and were beaten" (p. 168).

"In all the villages of the district, the people are asking about these village atrocities, which they say, are worse than the Punjab atrocities perpetrated by the British imperialists in 1919" (p. 169).

"300 policemen raided the village of Katuru, Gannavaram taluka, Krishna district on the 16th of this month. All men in the village—irrespective of their creed—were cruelly lathi-charged. Women were abused. About 400 men were stripped of their clothes and paraded in the streets in nakedness....Are these the measures the police have to adopt under the Congress rule?" (p. 170).

"Andhra Prabha, a leading Telugu daily of Andhra, in its editorial dated July 26, 1949, wrote: "Uncivilised, atrocious, unspeakable—these words may be very strong words; but even these words are not sufficient to describe the barbarous raids by the police in the Krishna district. The same gruesome and sordid story from every village—gather all people, indiscriminately beat them, strip some of them of their clothes, parade those people in the streets in nakedness...By doing such things, it does not result in suppressing the Communists.." (p. 170).

"The repression was so brutal, atrocious and wanton that the very Congress leaders who themselves brought and organised police raids on villages, were forced to issue statements in the press condemning it, seeing the anger of the people" (p. 171).

"Seva Dals (Congress volunteer squads) are being fed with the money looted during the raids in the villages. Drunkards, habitual convicts, have become village Congress leaders..Loot, burning of houses, murders are being committed..."(p. 171).

The following is an incident which Gogineni Lakshminarayana, brother of N.G. Ranga, narrated. "K. Lakshminarayana, who was a victim of police atrocities, said to me: "At 4 p.m. police came. They asked: you son of a bitch, are you a communist leader? So asking, I was beaten heavily. I fell unconscious. They spoilt all the foodstuffs and other things in my house, looted all the money, and went away. Doors and cots were broken.."(p. 172).

"U. Pitchireddy was beaten with the butt-end of guns and lathis. His property was destroyed. He was arrested, and was being taken to Subbareddy's house. (This Subbareddy is the biggest landlord and was the initiator of these raids.) Meanwhile, Subbareddy came that way. The police officer asked Subbareddy whether he was satisfied. He replied, 'No, not yet. Some more people should be made to sit in a row and beaten..." (p.172).

"Seven peasants were forcibly taken by the armed special police from the villages of Kodur, Velvadam and Ganapavarm and they were alleged to have been shot dead in Butchireddipalem near Mylavaram. —Challapalli Narayanarao and Tatiah, who were hiding in the vicinity of Kothapalem, were captured by the men belonging to the party of the landed aristocrats and handed over to the police party headed by the circle inspector, Avanigadda. They were shot dead. This incident was also reported as an encounter between the police and the Communists. But late on, it was reported that a reward was distributed to the men, who captured them both. —Venkateshwar Rao of Movva village was captured by the men belonging to the party of the landed aristocrats and beaten to death at Pedamuktevi police station" (p. 172).

"Four dead bodies were brought by the police to this village, and they reported to the magistrate that there was an 'encounter' (p. 173).

"Jasti Raghavayya and Mukkamala Rao who are standing trial before the Special Second Class magistrate, Vijayawada, were on bail. They were regularly attending every hearing. One night they were taken away by the special police from their respective houses to an unknown destination (and were shot dead.)" (p. 173).

"The situation has deteriorated to an unimaginable extent. Our freedom and our independence are at the mercy of local leaders and of those who have political power in their hands...A police officer can open fire on any number of persons. Nobody can raise his voice. The police officer was given protection vide another section...Such powers have made some police officers follow in the footsteps of Dyer" (p.173).

"Such was the ghastly murder rule of the Congress. And yet, Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Indian Union, had then made a lying attack on the Communist Party and attributed to it murders, arson, loot. The capable Sardar could do it and put it to the kept press, for malpropaganda, only after he had ordered the closure of the democratic press and gagged all the people's voices, only after banning the Communist Party and all mass organisations, and only after he had clamped down his rule of fascist terror and medieval barbarous regime" (p. 174).

After the entry of the Indian Army into Telangana, poor people perished in large numbers. Both touchables and Untouchables fell in bunches. The military atrocities continued as routine activities. Exactly at the same time, the task which Ambedkar—who claimed that the welfare of the depressed castes alone was his objective—was carrying was to repudiate each and every criticism levelled against the Constitution of India and to deliver speeches in the Constituent Assembly declaring how great that document is.

Do you remember the questions which Ambedkar showered in the Constituent Assembly?

"People are living in abject poverty... They lack social and economic equality...How long shall we continue these contradictions?" Further, do you remember the commandments that he uttered on other occasions, 'The Depressed Classes don't have land. Land is, in the hands of upper castes, like a weapon. The Depressed Classes should achieve political power'?

When the rural poor take the risk of life in order to get rid of poverty and want to rule themselves, there is no wonder if the exploitative State tries to suppress the people. The exploitative class does not refrain itself from suppressing others. But we are not concerned with the government. We are concerned with Ambedkar! Didn't Ambedkar—who give long lectures on Buddha's Ahimsa (non-violence), the democracy of the Hindu kings of the past and bloodless liberty and fraternity—know what the Indian army was doing in the Telangana villages? According to him, all the citizens in the country should act in accordance with 'law'. They should not violate it. This means, if the poor want lands, they have to buy them with money; but not go against the propertied class in the name of 'class struggle'. It will be illegitimate. It will be unlawful.

People should serve the country and protect the country's independence until the last drop of their blood is shed. If they resort to such evil acts like occupying others' properties, the government has to take action against them as per the Constitution. The government should not send the police against people every now and then for petty reasons but what can it do if not use the police in such a serious situation? As per the Constitution, the government is obliged to safeguard the properties of the propertied class. It should not allow people to occupy their land without compensation. Therefore, the government has no other way except to suppress people. It performed its task—this is Ambedkar's view.

Hence, he was not moved at all by the atrocities of the military under the direction of his government. In the name of defending democracy he stood in support of the Congress. Without leaving his ministership, he continued in the government without any hesitation!

3) Break with the Congress!

When the scene of Ambedkar's surrender to Congress was completely over, the Congress' affection for Ambedkar diminished. There were no indications of Ambedkar's getting the ministry of his choice. Moreover, he was not taken into any one of the newly formed committees.

He waited and waited for four years with a lot of patience and new hopes. But, how long could he wait? As the hopes diminish, or to use a Telugu metaphor, as hopes touch the bottom, patience of a person too dies, doesn't it? At last, he got frustrated and resigned his post of Law Minister on September 27, 1955.

Usually, in such contexts, the Prime Minister tries to beseech the person who has resigned and asks him to withdraw his resignation. But here no such thing happened.

Ambedkar issued a statement explaining as to why he had to resign. I have not found this statement in any of the Ambedkar's volumes available. So I am taking these details from the chapter 'Resignation' on p. 358 of **Yendluri**'s Telugu book **"Dr. Ambedkar jiivitacaritra"** (Biography of Dr. Ambedkar). Mr. Yendluri mentions *The Hindu*, dated 27-9-1951 as his source.

Ambedkar mentioned 4 reasons for his resignation.

The very first reason is that he did not get the ministry which he wanted.

Second reason: The government did not provide proper safeguards in the case of depressed castes.

Third reason: The foreign policy of the government was not acceptable to him.

Fourth reason: He did not like the way ministers were treated as followers of decisions made by Committees. *(Oh, this means he liked atrocities on Telangana!)*. Ambedkar declared these four points as reasons for his resignation.

While elaborating the second reason, he said, "Right from my young age, my life has been dedicated to the service of depressed castes". But, the government's negligence of the depressed castes could not be the first and foremost cause for Ambedkar's dissatisfaction. 'Not getting the ministry of his choice' became the foremost cause for his dissatisfaction.

His explanation of the first reason was very strange and there was no consistency between the reason as to why he didn't like the law department and what he said about the same Law department a year after his resignation!

"I could understand the fact that the importance of the Law ministry in the central cabinet is very low even during the days when I served as a member in the viceroy's executive. Moreover, the role of the Law minister in formulating the government policies is very limited. The post of a Law Minister is meant to accommodate very old lawyers who are tired of varied experiences involving ups and downs. Hence, it is common to describe this law ministry as an empty soap box" (Yendluri, p. 361).

The same Ambedkar, who described the law department as "empty soap box" a year ago, while speaking in a meeting at Pune on December 22, 1952, glorified the law department saying how it discharges a great responsibility and how it can maintain democracy. He said that democracy would sustain if all people obey the laws.

"It is the responsibility of the law ministry to see that justice, equality and liberty in a democratic society are accessible as rights to all people. Hence, the highest place is accorded to the law ministry in democracy" (Yendluri, p. 373).

This is how he glorified the greatness of the law ministry. (Then why didn't he like such a ministry?) Did the greatness of a useless ministry begin to appear gradually after losing that ministry and after living without any position? Otherwise, how was it possible for the "empty soap box" to acquire such greatness?

This humanist—who is very anxious to make justice, equality, democracy and everything for all people—did not find any reason during the period in which the military was committing atrocities on the people of Telangana. 'Not getting a ministry of his choice' alone became a strong reason for quitting the government!

In this manner, Ambedkar developed antagonism for the Congress since he gave up his ministership in the central cabinet. The Congress Party that was a party of great discipline till yesterday has now become an anarchic party! The intensity of Ambedkar's rivalry that started with condemning Nehru's policies had gone to the extent of condemning the Constitution.

4. 'I will be the first person to burn this Constitution': Ambedkar

Ambedkar became a member of Rajya Sabha in 1952. In 1953, while speaking in Rajya Sabha on the 'Bill of the Andhra State', Ambedkar criticised the Bill for not providing any safe guards for the rights of minorities. In the same speech, he criticised the Constitution as well.

This information is not available in Ambedkar's volumes. I am citing it from **B. Vijayabharathi**'s Telugu book, **"Baba Saheb Ambedkar"**. This book informs us that Ambedkar said the following with reference to the Constitution:

> "All people call me the maker of the Constitution. In fact, I had to write many things against my wish. Now, I am not satisfied with the Constitution that I myself wrote. I will be the first fellow that comes forward to burn it. This Constitution is not useful to any one" (p. 211).

Can any body imagine such an upside down arguments from the mouth of the same person?

Firstly, it is wrong to say, 'the Constitution that I wrote'. We have already seen who drafted it and how it was finalised. He should have said, "the Constitution which the 7-member Committee wrote". What is this expression, 'this Constitution that I wrote'?

'I had to write a lot against my wish in the Constitution'—by this, Ambedkar means this: 'we prepared the Constitution as per the majority decision. I cannot do it as per my decision singly, can I? I should accept some thing which the majority decides even if I don't like it, shouldn't I?

Here there are many points. There is no difference of opinion between the majority of the members and Ambedkar concerning the fundamental aspects of the Constitution. If at all there were any differences, they were superficial issues. That person does not participate in that work if there are differences in fundamental issues. He won't agree with it. Therefore, it is a meaningless argument to say after leaving Congress thus, 'I didn't like many points in the Constitution'.

When a person associates himself willingly in a collective activity, he has to act in accordance with the majority decisions. This is the right method. Ambedkar too has to do the same thing. In that case, why should he say, 'I didn't like many things at that time'? What is the problem that Ambedkar now faces afresh since he followed the majority decision at that time?

Now the entire problem is 'not getting the ministry of his choice'! Hence antagonism with Congress! Further, antagonism with the Constitution! He has to find fault with it. If he finds fault with it, people will ask him, 'It was you who made it, wasn't it'? Hence he says, 'I didn't like many things then itself'. It is Ambedkar's belief that this argument would save him. He was so confident that nobody would ask him thus: 'if you didn't like that job, you should have abandoned it! At that time,

you should have criticised the Constitution the way as you are criticising it now, shouldn't you?

'Though I didn't like many things in this Constitution, I acted according to the majority decision'—this is how Ambedkar argues. Then what about the challenges that he made during the discussions in the Constituent Assembly? "I venture to say that this Constitution is not bad"—Did he say these words too in accordance with the majority decision and contrary to his own views? "I challenge any of the critics of the Constitution..."—Did he make this challenge too in accordance with the majority decision?

If the same person who then 'ventured' and 'challenged' now says, 'This Constitution is useful to none! I am ready to burn it', this will be another adventure! How can the adventures of circus people compete with this adventure of demagoguery? Ambedkar himself then said that the people of this country should follow the law, didn't he? Well, then, is burning Constitution a lawful activity?

Why did he acquire this sense, namely, 'this Constitution is useless'—which he did not have in 1948—in the subsequent period? What happened in the recent past except that Ambedkar did not have ministership!

Is this Constitution useful to none? Is it also useless for the propertied classes? If so why have they retained such a Constitution? Are the propertied classes in this country stupid?

We have already seen earlier that Ambedkar did not sweat for the drafting of the Constitution. We have seen that he made some modifications. But now, what do Ambedkar's words, namely, 'this Constitution is useless', indicate? Don't his words prove that whatever little scrutiny and minor modification he did are useless?

How is it possible for a person to talk as he likes by changing his arguments upside down as if, to use a Telugu saying, 'his is not a tongue but a palmyra rafter'? How is it possible to understand this?

Well, what happened to 'service to the country', 'maintenance of independence' and so on?

19 AMBEDKAR HAS CHANGED 'RELIGION'

Ambedkar, who declared way back in 1936 that he had decided to change religion (in the essay *Annihilation of Caste*), changed his religion after 20 years. He embraced 'Buddhism' in 1956.

It is very justifiable if Untouchables or other low caste people develop contempt for Hinduism. But it is very surprising to note that Ambedkar—who developed such contempt and who decided to leave it—was able to continue as a Hindu for 20 years!

The Conference of Mahars held in Bombay on May 31, 1936 resolved that 'the way to solve the problems of Untouchables is to leave Hinduism and embrace another religion' (Vol. 5, p. 403). This means that apart from Ambedkar, some other Dalits too were ready to change religion way back in 1936. Ambedkar did not explain why that conversion into another religion did not take place until after 20 years.

Ambedkar did not read his essay, *Annihilation of Caste*, which he originally wrote to read at the conference of Jat-Pat Todak Mandal (hereafter Mandal) in 1936. That conference did not in fact take place because the organizers of the conference raised objections with reference to two points in the essay. They suggested Ambedkar to delete certain words and Ambedkar did not agree to it. The conference did not take place.

The two points were:

1) Criticism of the Hindu religious texts.
2) Reference to change of religion.

These two points seemed objectionable to the Mandal. These points will become clear if we read the essay *Annihilation of Caste*. In this essay, Ambedkar made some suggestion for reforming the Hindu religion. (We have already seen what these suggestions were on an earlier occasion in this book. See section 1 of chapter 13 of this book).

The main suggestion was: There should be one and only one standard book of Hindu Religion, acceptable to all Hindus and recognized by all Hindus. This of course means that all other books of Hindu religion such as the *Vedas, Shastras* and *Puranas,* which are treated as sacred and authoritative, must by law cease to be so and the preaching of any doctrine, religious or social contained in these books should be penalized.

In addition to this, Ambedkar also made some more suggestions. This is how Ambedkar wanted to reform Hindu religion.

Mandal did not agree with this idea. They too want reforms in the Hindu religion. That is why, they started the 'Association for the breaking of Caste and the like' (Jat Pat Todak Mandal) and conducting programmes with a view to breaking the caste system. It is only an Association for breaking the caste and not an Association for breaking religion. This Association rejects the rules of religion with reference to observance of caste distinctions. But the Association did not like the idea of rejecting the 'Vedas' as Ambedkar suggested. They became upset, 'Alas! What is this!' They persuaded Ambedkar again and again: 'why don't you delete certain things'. But Ambedkar did not agree. This was the first reason for not holding the conference.

In this issue, it was the fault of the Association. Because, when they call a person to speak in their Association, that person should have the freedom to express his views. The Association should examine responsibly if there is anything worth learning from those views. It should have examined Ambedkar's suggestions and criticism in terms of whether they were justified and practical, accepted the positive aspects and rejected the negative aspects. There is no rule that the Association has to agree with whatever he says. Hence why such restrictions though gently, 'Delete this point, delete that point in your speech'? This was the wrong thing that the Association did.

The second point: reference to the change of religion. We find this very clearly at two places in the essay, *Annihilation of Caste*.

> "...this would probably be my last address to a Hindu audience..." (Vol.1, p. 78).

> "I think they are not likely to alter yours. But whether they do or do not, the responsibility is entirely yours. You must make your efforts to uproot Caste, if not in my way, then in your way. I am sorry, I will not be with you. I have decided to change. This is not the place for giving reasons. But even when I am gone out of your fold, I will watch your movement with active sympathy and you will have my assistance for what it may be worth" (p. 80).

From these words, it is clear that he talked about the changing of his religion. Moreover, it also amounts to saying, 'Annihilation of caste is not possible. All low caste people have to change their religion'. In the same essay, in other contexts, he also said more clearly that 'annihilation of caste' is impossible.

The representatives of the Association read the manuscript of the speech. There is a mention of change of religion in it. They did not like such a declaration to take place on their platform. Because, they formed their Association for the sake of 'breaking of caste'. Its very name is 'Jat Pat Todak Mandal' (Association for Breaking Caste). It does not observe caste distinctions. Hence they invited Ambedkar to give the Presidential Address. Such an association should only say, 'don't observe castes. We have to and we can eliminate this evil practice', but should not say, 'no use, castes do not go, the solution is to change religion'. The Association should not give scope to such views in its conferences. That is why, the Association people went through the draft of Ambedkar's speech and objected to his declaration of the change of religion. The correspondence went on between the two sides on all these matters.

On one of the much earlier occasions, while talking to a representative of the Association, Ambedkar mentioned the issue of change of religion and told him, 'I have no desire to use your platform from which to advocate my views regarding change of religion'. But without sticking to his own words, he very clearly mentioned the change of his religion at 2 places. When the Association person asked about it he answered as if he had just mentioned it indirectly. In his reply he said,

> "Indeed until, you came to Bombay on the 9th April the Mandal did not know what sort of an address I was preparing. It was when you came to Bombay that I voluntarily told you that I had no desire to use your platform from which to advocate my views regarding change of religion by the Depressed Classes. I think I have scrupulously kept that promise in the preparation of the address. Beyond a passing reference of an indirect character where I say that "I am sorry I will not be here... etc." I have said nothing about the subject in my address. When I see you object even to such a passing and so indirect a reference, I feel bound to ask; did you think that in agreeing to preside over your conference I would be agreeing to suspend or to give up my views regarding change of faith by the Depressed Classes? If you did think so I must tell you that I am in no way responsible for such a mistake on your part. If any of you had even hinted to me that in exchange for the honour you were doing me by electing as President, I was to abjure my faith in my programme of conversion, I would have told you in quite plain terms that I cared more for my faith than for any honour from you" (p. 34).

This was Ambedkar's reply! The person who said that he would not use others' platform to talk about the change of religion did not stick to his word. Moreover he said, 'I said it in passing and indirectly. What did I say more than this? Do you object to this much reference?'

Will this be an answer or bullying?

The representative of the Association behaved with a sense of tolerance in this matter. They requested Ambedkar to reconsider the matter. They were not suggesting to either Ambedkar or the low caste people not to change their religion. They were merely requesting him not to mention the change of religion on their platform!

The Association was quite reasonable on this point. It was a big blunder on the part of Ambedkar. Ambedkar should have realized that, in the conference of an association meant for breaking caste, he should not express the view that he was changing the religion because we can't eliminate castes. Or he should have heeded the advice of others when they pointed out this. He did not do either of these two things. For Ambedkar, whatever he does and however he does, it appears to be a wonderful thing. Though the Mandal people did not suggest to him to give up his idea of the change of religion (they simply asked him not to mention it on their platform), he accused them that they were asking him to do so, that they tried to tame him by giving him the Presidentship as a bribe, that he sticks to his guns unperturbed and the entire fault lies with them only. He himself committed the entire mistake but shouted at them, 'Do you think I surrender to your Presidentship'. He also made strange arguments, 'I have not done anything wrong; I am not at all responsible'.

When the Mandal said, 'This is objectionable to us', Ambedkar should have at once realized, 'okay! I have mentioned that point as I have not thought that it would be objectionable to you. I will definitely delete it. I don't insist that I should declare my decision to change religion from your platform'. How nice it would have been if he had said so. But Ambedkar did not do so.

At that time (in 1936), Ambedkar was not in a hurry to change religion. He had not yet decided the religion into which he wanted to convert. If he wanted to declare it at once, he himself could give that information to the newspapers. Or he could call a meeting of the Dalits and then declare his intention in it. When such ways were available, how was it appropriate to choose an association for the annihilation of caste? Moreover, is it a sensible thing not to understand his mistake when the Mandal organizers were upset and requested him not to declare it on their platform? What was the loss for low castes' people if he had not declared this intention of changing religion in that very conference? What humiliation did Ambedkar have to face?

Those who consider religion as an irrational matter will not have any religion. According to such people, all these that appear to be religious problems are due to social conditions. But all those who believe that God

exists and he only causes hardships and comforts of human beings will have some religion or the other.

Ambedkar's method is neither of the two. He argues that religion is necessary even in the absence of belief in God.

> "The correct view is that religion like language is social for the reason that either is essential for social life and the individual has to have it because without it he cannot participate in the life of the society" (Vol. 5, p. 409).

Quoting another author approvingly, Ambedkar also says,

> "It (religion) is a means by which society exercises its control over the conduct of the individual in order to maintain the social order" (Vol.5, p. 410).

Participation in the life of society takes place by means of processes of production and distribution. Society itself does not exit without these processes. Relations between human beings form only through such processes. The population that does not do any labour too is connected with those processes.

Religious activities simply indicate superficial collective relations. As human beings collectively practise worship, festivals, customs and the like, the same practice appears as participation in the life of society. But religious activities do not constitute the real meaning of social life. Social life exists even without them. Similarly, the view that 'an individual cannot participate in the social life without religion' is totally false. Similarly, the view that 'religion, like language, is social' is also wrong. Without language, relations between human beings do not exist. But relations exist even without religion. Hence, language and religion are not identical.

Similarly, there is no truth in the view that 'religion is a means to regulate the conduct of individual'. The nature of 'labour relations' alone regulate the conduct of individuals. The conduct of master and slaves depends on their relations only. Religion merely recites superficial sermons and moral principles. **All religions defend the existing exploitative relations. Buddhism, which does not accept the existence of god, too did the same thing.** Hence, there is no scope to think that religion, which rejects god, would teach great conduct to human beings. Such a view is totally meaningless. If all human beings want good conduct, they have to establish 'relations that do not involve exploitation of labour'. Good society will not emerge due to religious sermons. **Religions have been in existence for many thousands of years. No society has become a good society due to religion.** All the views of Ambedkar concerning religion are meaningless and contrary to reality.

Since the resolution of the Dalits to change religion, the upper caste people began to criticize: 'what can the Untouchables gain by conversion?'

If a person does not believe in religion, it is a different issue. But when people have such beliefs they have to reject the religion that humiliates them.

What the Untouchables gained by conversion is this: they can express their resentment toward the Hindu religion that insults them. This gain is enough! This is certainly a gain for those who experience humiliation.

Concerning this conversion, Ambedkar discussed at length in volume 5.

Referring to the concession, some people criticized, 'If Untouchables leave Hinduism, they will lose political rights that they get through Hinduism, don't they?'

Ambedkar's answer: they may lose them. But they will get rights that ought to come due to the new religion.

Another criticism: Will the new religion free Untouchables from an inferior status?

Ambedkar's answer: If Untouchables choose a religion that has no castes and becomes part of it, they can gradually forget their inferior status.

This is how Ambedkar offered some answers.

Conversions have been taking place in India for a long time. For example, many untouchables have been converting to Christianity.

The real question concerning conversion is: 'Have Hindus stopped to observe Untouchability in the case of Untouchables who converted to other religions?' Ambedkar says such a thing has not happened.

> "Can an untouchable after his conversion to Christianity take water from a public well? Are his children admitted to a public school? Can he enter a shop and buy things from inside? Will a barber shave him? Will a washerman wash his clothes? Can he travel in a bus? Will he be admitted in Public offices without compunction? Will he be allowed to live in the touchable quarters of the village? Will the Hindus take water from him? Will they dine with him? Will not the Hindus take a bath if he touches him? I am sure the answer to every one of these questions must be in the negative. In other words conversion has not brought about any change in the social status of the untouchable convert. To the general mass of the Hindus the untouchable remains an untouchable even though he becomes a Christian" (Vol. 5, p. 470).

Then a question arises at once: 'Why should they convert?' Answer to this question is the same as we saw before. The Conversion is for the purpose of expressing resentment against Hinduism, not with a view that the Hindus will change and stop observing untouchability as soon as Untouchables convert.

Conversion takes place not only among the low castes but also the upper castes. Whichever religion they may convert into, the upper castes' people continue to observe caste distinctions as before in relation to low castes that had already converted into this new religion. They transfer castes into a religion where there are no castes originally. For example, lower castes could not escape from the menace of caste even after their conversion into Christianity.

> "Christianity has not succeeded in dissolving the feeling of caste from among the converts to Christianity....There are Brahmin Christians and Non-Brahmin Christians. Among Non-Brahmin Christians there are Maratha Christians, Mahar Christians, Mang Christians and Bhangi Christians. Similarly in the South there are Pariah Christians, Mala Christians and Madiga Christians. They would not intermarry, they would not inter-dine. They are as much caste ridden as the Hindus are" (Vol.5, pp: 455-56).

Ambedkar felt that Christianity could not lay down strict rules so that the Hindus who converted to Christianity do not observe caste distinctions and Christianity does not have the character of fighting injustice.

> "It is an incontrovertible fact that Christianity was not enough to end the slavery of the Negroes in the United States. A civil war was necessary to give the Negro the freedom which was denied to him by the Christians" (Vol. 5, p. 471).

Owing to this, Ambedkar did not like Christianity. He did not choose Christianity when he wanted to convert. Likewise, he did not like Islam and Sikhism also. Finally he chose Buddhism.

Could Buddhism restrain the Hindus from observing caste distinctions after their conversion into Buddhism? Did Hindus who joined this religion stop observing Untouchability? Could Buddhism put strict restrictions on Hindus? Didn't Buddhism too like Christianity, tolerate 'slavery'? Ambedkar has not touched any of these questions. He simply said, 'I will leave Hinduism! I will leave Hinduism!'; but it did not take place for 20 years. His conversion would not have taken place if something had happened to his life, wouldn't it? There wouldn't have been a scope to demonstrate his protest against the Hindu religion, isn't it? It is very surprising why he did not have the determination to do that act!

Finally, he converted to Buddhism in Nagpur on October 14, 1956. Then he was 66.

Any book on Ambedkar's life will tell us how grandly and colourfully the conversion function was celebrated.

For Ambedkar, Marxism had been a big burden, or to us a Telugu metaphor a 'stove on the chest' day and night. This was proved once again in this celebration of conversion. In his speech that he made immediately after conversion into Buddhism, he devoted most of his time to attack Marxism. Those biographies of Ambedkar reported that Ambedkar taught the Dalits: that Marxism merely preaches physical comforts like 'eating, drinking and enjoying' themselves and that Marxism is not useful for human beings. Those books depicted that Ambedkar, after embracing Buddhism, got mental peace and tranquillity hitherto unknown.

It is surprising that Ambedkar got 'mental peace' and 'tranquillity' when the Dalits' problems and Untouchability continued as before! Well, then, it will be alright if all Dalits get mental peace by following the same path, isn't it? How easy it is to change religion? A job of half an hour! Does any body need more than this if they find such an easy path to get mental peace and tranquillity? Why did he delay this for 20 long years?

After attaining tranquillity by embracing Buddhism in October, Ambedkar gave a talk on *Buddhism and Marxism* in a conference of Buddhists held in Katmandu (Nepal) in November. The same speech turned into the essay *Buddha or Karl Marx*? Ambedkar's peace of mind might have reached its peak when he spoke that Marxism is not useful for mankind and that Buddha's Ashtanga Marga is the best path for the world.

On the whole, Ambedkar learnt to get tranquillity of mind only by condemning Marxism always!

20 WHAT, THEN, IS AMBEDKAR?

Now it is easy to understand what are the positive aspects and the negative aspects of Ambedkar's writings and movements; what should we accept and what should we reject concerning the 'Dalit' and Caste questions.

➢ Ambedkar brought the problem of Untouchability to the notice of all people in the country. He moulded the struggle against this evil practice

into a movement for political rights. He created the consciousness among the Untouchables that they too have rights.

➢ Though the movement for reservations started before Ambedkar, he continued that movement until reservations were achieved. Owing to reservations, higher education and higher-grade jobs became accessible to at least a certain population of lower castes.

➢ Ambedkar had exposed the Congress and Gandhi to the maximum extent on the question of Untouchability. Had he not exposed them, all people would still believe that Gandhi was a person who was greatly concerned for the Untouchables. Now at least some people have come to know the truth about Gandhi.

➢ Ambedkar exhibited a strong opposition to not only Untouchability but the caste system as a whole. He expected equality without caste distinctions.

➢ He suggested to people to reject Hinduism, which still has caste distinctions. He himself rejected it.

As all these aspects do good for the lower castes, we should recognize them and follow them necessarily. However, along these aspects, there are many aspects, which do a lot of harm to the lower castes, and hence we have to reject them totally. This is a contradiction in the character of Ambedkar! This is a big tragedy!

Ambedkar defended religious beliefs with more determination than Orthodox people; but in the name of 'rationalism'! He did not receive any rational aspect of Buddhism. The Buddhism, which he depicted with his own explanations, is crowded with superstitious beliefs like all other religions. Similarly his Economics is the same which defends exploitative incomes and exploitative property rights. His philosophy, his politics and everything is in accordance with relations of exploitation.

When one does not understand the fact that it is **labour**, which distinguishes humans from animals and that human society means **ensemble of labour relations**, only thing left out for people in order to understand any issue is that which appears outwardly. This is what all people who ignore the nature of labour relations do. This is what Ambedkar too had done.

In the case of property rights, Ambedkar did not utilise even to a minimum extent the logic and rationalism which he applied in the case of caste distinctions. Hence Ambedkar too became part of elite who support relations of exploitation. He sunk in innumerable contradictions.

The moment he started his writing, there began a baseless confidence in Ambedkar that he is a great intellectual. There emerged a kind of false logic, namely, 'whatever I wrote is logic'!'

Whenever he studied a problem, Ambedkar used to declare at every step that none has found out the cause for the problem and that he alone discovered it. But none of his studies—beginning from his 1916-essay, *Castes in India* till his 1956-essay, *Buddha or Karl Marx* is neither logical nor honest. Readers had to observe innumerable inconsistencies in these essays.

What correct cause did any research of Ambedkar show for any problem that he studied? This will become clear if we recall his studies in a sequence.

➢ What cause did he show for the origin of castes in his essay? He said that castes originated due to endogamy and Brahmins started endogamous marriages in order to maintain their domination and privileges. Which means Brahmins were already dominant since the period when there were no castes! The Shudra Varna existed as a 'menial' Varna even during the period of Varnas. In that case, what is the difference between Varnas and castes?

Ambedkar said that there was a time when there were only three upper Varnas. In the same period when four Varnas did not yet exist, Brahmins had privileges that they get by birth. On the one hand he pointed out to such privileges and on the other hand he argued that Varnas are not hereditary and only castes are hereditary.

The same person, who said that Varnas are hereditary during the period of the three Varnas, made numerous haphazard arguments, namely, that Varnas during the period of four Varnas change once in four years, that Brahmins and Shudras become Shudras and Brahmins respectively, that Shudras also studied in Gurukulas for 12 years and that all the lower caste people imposed castes on themselves voluntarily.

From the problem of castes, he brought forth the argument of 'surplus women and surplus men'. Without having minimum common sense that there won't be any problem when both men (widowers) and women (widows) who want to remarry are available, he argued that problems like Sati cropped up and claimed that he alone had discovered this fact.

Sometimes he said that 'Varnas are superior than castes' and sometimes he said that both are the same in the sense that one is "vicious" while the other is "pernicious"—with such blunderous arguments, what could Ambedkar say about how castes originated and what the distinction between Varnas and castes is?

➢ Well, what could he discover in his essay, *Who were the Shudras?* He began to depict that Kshatriyas of the Shudra branch were of Solar descent and known for valour *('virile people')* while the rest of the Kshatriyas were cowards *("an imbecile lot without any self-respect")*. The entire research in *Who were the Shudras?* is based on this argument! He said that during that period only the upper Varnas existed without 'menial' (servant) varna. Starting with the claim that he would narrate the history of the present day Shudras who constituted 80% of the Indian population, he concluded that there is no connection between the Shudras of the past and present. In this manner, this study, with the title *Who were the Shudras?*, turned out to be a futile exercise that does not help us to learn who the Shudras were.

➢ What did he say in *The Untouchables: who were they and why had they became untouchables?* Initially he said that there were no contradictions between those who were in villages and those who were outside the villages. Those who guarded the villages, perhaps, might have joined Buddhism. Perhaps, this conversion might have angered those who lived within the villages. Thus he conducted all his research with such assumptions as, 'this is how it might have happened', 'that is how it might have happened'. He did not show evidence to any of his assumptions.

➢ Regarding Untouchability, in his essay *The Untouchables*, he argued that Untouchability did not exist before Christ and it did not begin until 400 AD. Didn't he argue so? But later, ignoring all this he showed in "Buddha and His Dhamma" that Untouchability existed even during Buddha's time and it was Buddha's greatness that he admitted even untouchables as his disciples!

However small the issue may be and however easily understandable the issue may be, it invariably contains inconsistencies, skipping points and bullying arguments! He argues in whatever manner it suits him. Nowhere do we find any other principle of argument.

➢ Serious accusations against Brahmins that they extended the span of Kaliyuga!

➢ The poet who wrote 'Mahabharata' is a lover of truth ("truthful") at one place and an insincere fellow ("vainglorious") at another place. Both comments in the same work of his research!

➢ Ambedkar argued and argued that slavery is 'better' than Untouchability and at the end concludes that it may be 'over hastiness' to think like that! As if it is not he who made such observations initially!

➢ It is needless to talk about the *Annihilation of Caste*. This is very

famous as a 'great work'! But what Ambedkar concluded in this book is this: Annihilation of caste can take place only if the Brahmins agree. Otherwise, no! Even low castes too don't change. On the whole annihilation of caste is impossible. This is what he said in this book. True that low castes at present are ignorant. But is this ignorance an eternal truth? Isn't there any scope for these people to change? Isn't there any 'teaching' or 'programme' to offer to these people? What path did this essay show to low castes? Moreover, he warned that subcastes don't mix and mixing sub-castes is very dangerous!

➢ What about the division of labour? Ambedkar himself observed that the Hindu religion is based on the division of labour which assigned unclean jobs to lower castes and clean jobs to upper castes. But if others make similar observation, namely, 'there is a connection between castes and division of labour', he does not accept it.

➢ He referred to the 'hierarchy' or gradation of labourers as 'division of labourers'. He argued that such a division of labourers is specific to India. But 'hierarchy' or 'gradation' of labourers is present in all the countries. It is present even in those countries where there are no castes. Therefore, there is nothing new in what Ambedkar discovered!

➢ He started with a claim that he would propose some 'safeguards from economic exploitation' but ended with safeguards for the continuation of exploitative rights and exploitative sources of income. Moreover, those rights and income are hereditary and continue till dooms-day or to use a Telugu metaphor, 'until moon and stars exist'!

➢ Is it necessary to talk about Ambedkar's hatred for Marxism? How did Marxism become such an antagonistic theory to a person who is a representative of the Dalits? It is because his views are not strongly attached to the interests of the Dalits. All that attracted him was the capitalistic path. Hence the hatred for Marxism. He needed one reason or another to reject Marxism. Hence he discovered 'violence' and the 'use of force' in it.

What remains in Ambedkar's writings which we may claim, 'this is a good research?'

Biographers of Ambedkar glorified (or to use a Telugu idiom 'raised to the skies') every aspect of his research—however inconsistent and haphazard it may have been. There is not a single instance where they raised questions, namely, 'what is this argument? What kind of research is this?' They didn't raise questions even on such analysis as 'solar line' and 'lunar line' which Ambedkar presented as if they are great scientific explanations. No question against his formulation that fusion of sub-castes

is 'mischievous' and a 'wrong remedy'! The biographers did not raise a single question on several dozens of wrong formulations of Ambedkar.

The reason for so many kinds of errors and mistakes in Ambedkar is that his thought process is sunk mainly within capitalistic limitations. Which means, he considered every 'outward appearance' as great knowledge! He did not develop his logic beyond such outward appearances. Two examples clearly indicate this defect of Ambedkar.

One example:

> "The development of articulate speech was the first thing which, from the point of view of human progress, divided man from the brute" (Vol.3, p. 88).

Human beings speak and animals do not speak. This is some thing that 'appears' outwardly! If we consider only this aspect, it appears as if speech distinguishes humans from animals. But if we don't stop at this point and raise some relevant questions—namely, 'Animals live without speech, don't they?', 'Why did humans require speech which animals didn't require?' For what necessity did speech emerge?'—then we will find a way to understand things that do not appear outwardly.

The actual cause that transformed the 'animal stage' into the 'human stage' was 'labour'. Animals eat whatever they find in nature and live in accordance with their natural instincts. But the same is not the case with humans. Human beings transform substances found in nature into other forms. The 'Human stage' begins with the simplest sorts of labour like using stones and branches of trees as implements and taking safety measures against the sun and the rain. For the purpose of and in the process of these activities, rudimentary thoughts, different sounds from the oral cavity (mouth), isolated utterances began and accordingly the mouth, brain, feet and hands developed and gradually language developed. The need for speech—which is absent among animal—arose among humans because a specific feature called 'performance of labour' began among human beings.

To say that speech distinguishes humans from animals amounts to observing only outward appearances. To make such observations, no logic and intellect are necessary. It is something which everybody knows. But some thinking is necessary in order to understand the fact that 'human beings developed speech due to the feature of performance of labour'. Only if we are able to understand this fact, it amounts to correct knowledge.

Let us look at another example to understand the difference between a superficial understanding and a proper understanding of things. While discussing the economic conditions of rural people, Ambedkar opposes Gandhi's system of using the charakha and proposes 'greater urbanisation'

as a 'salvation'. Arguing that the government should make people move from villages to towns, Ambedkar said,

> "Sir, that being the position, the view I take—and I say this with full deliberation—that the salvation of this province and, if I may say so, the salvation of the whole of India lies in greater urbanisation: in reviving our towns, in building our industries, in removing as much population as we possibly can from our villages to the towns. What is there in villages? After all, our village folks have no capital to run their agriculture in the best way in which agriculture ought to be run. Population is increasing every decade, and land is being fragmented every time a man and heirs come on the spot. Everywhere the situation is as bad as one could conceive it. the only way by which you can increase the standard of living of the people in the villages is not to give them an antiquated machine like the charkha or to force them to weave cloth which they cannot sell in a competitive market. The way to increase the standard of living is not to destroy industries and other revenues of service in the towns and force them to go to villages. The way lies in the other direction, namely, in taking away as many people as you possibly can from the villages and bringing them to the towns, giving them employment in industries and establishing better ways of economic life. That is the way" (Vol. 2, pp: 32-33).

It is true that means of livelihood for the poor people in villages is diminishing. It is also true that they may get some sort of means of livelihood if they move from villages to towns. These are superficial facts. Looking at these superficial things, if one believes that salvation of the country lies in the migration of the rural population to towns, it amounts to believing superficial facts as actual solutions!

Why do people in villages not have adequate land? Why are resources for agriculture not available? Instead of increasing industries in towns and bringing the rural population to towns, why can't the State establish those industries in villages? Why can't the State develop the villages as well? Ambedkar didn't have any of these questions. According to him, all industries should be in towns. The entire population should live in towns only. If this happens, the economic condition of people will improve. This alone is the 'salvation'!

But the correct solution is one which eliminates the distinction between 'town and country' (rural-urban contradiction). A given region should not have fewer amenities while another region has more amenities. Population should be spread over across the whole land wherever it is inhabitable. Agriculture and industry must be spread across all regions. There should be such a division of labour whereby all people can do both agricultural and industrial labour. If arrangements are made with a view

of equality that 'we have to develop all regions', then the distinctions like, 'this is a village' and 'this is a town' will disappear. This is the Marxist conception.

Whereas according to Ambedkar the State should increase 'urbanisation'. The correct solution from the view point of equality, we have to 'reduce' urbanisation'! The two are totally opposite theories!

In this manner, we find Ambedkar's conceptions irrelevant at every point.

Here we have to recall the question of 'reservations'.

Though reservations have been in existence for 50 years, the majority of the low castes do not have access to education. Which means, it can never happen that all the low caste people will become educated by means of reservations.

Further, the existence of reservations is a temporary solution that ought to continue only for a certain period of time and not as a permanent one.

Well, will the Dalit question be solved if the State makes reservations permanent? What does making reservations permanent mean? As reservations are provided on the basis of castes, permanence of reservations implies permanence of castes. To say that 'reservation should remain permanently', it amounts to saying, 'we want our low castes permanently. We will always remain as low caste people'. This means, permanence of reservation will do serious harm to the lower casts.

The principle of 'annihilation of caste' and the principle of the 'continuation of reservations' should co-exist only temporarily and not for a longer time.

What will the condition of lower castes be if reservations are removed after some period of time? By then, some part of the population in those lower castes will have entered higher education and mental labour by means of reservations. Their economic conditions will have improved to some extent. But the majority population of those lower castes have always been living in 'abject poverty' and the lowest manual labour. For this majority population, continuation and removal of reservations mean the same. Reservations are of no use to the majority population at any point of time. This means, if the condition of not a few but all the low caste people has to progress, we have to go not to the 'continuation of reservation' but to the theory that frees them from the exploitation of labour.

While this is so, what should happen in order to eliminate castes? All people can say that 'inter-caste marriages' must take place! Then how

should other conditions change if intercaste marriages have to take place? The economic conditions of low castes should improve. If this does not happen and if all the low castes remain in poverty as before, intercaste marriages between the upper caste youth and the poor lower caste youth will not at all take place. This means, we have to go to the theory of exploitation of labour in order to eliminate castes.

Viewed from any angle, except liberation from the exploitation of labour, no tip or trick like Ashtanga Marga will be effective to solve the problem of the Dalits.

But Ambedkar always saw Dalits as 'people belonging to a particular caste' and did not consider them as labourers and suggest solutions from that angle. He did not at all create a positive opinion toward Marxism (that is, the theory that explains exploitation of labour). He warned them again and again and again that they should not follow that theory and thus he closed the path of knowledge. This is the biggest harm which Ambedkar did to the Dalits! Not showing the path of class struggle to Dalits and reconciling them with reservations means, to use a Telugu saying, 'breaking the legs and giving a stick'. It is like destroying the capacity to walk independently and making a person physically handicapped.

Some of the educated Dalits sing wholly to the tune of Ambedkar: 'Ambedkar proposed greater economic schemes than Marx'. But some clever educated Dalits say, 'Dalits also need Marxism along with reservations. We can't deny it'. This is like thinking, 'why have an unnecessary dispute. It is better to accept Marxism too!' But we don't know whether such educated Dalits knew whether Ambedkar did not feel that need.

If educated Dalits do not know the fact that Ambedkar vehemently opposed Marxism, then they have to first know about it. Or if they accept Marxism even after knowing Ambedkar's opinion, then they have to first criticise all of Ambedkar's negative opinions of Marxism. They have to clearly declare that Ambedkar's understanding of Marxism is wrong. If they don't declare so and evade it and reconcile with the statement, the 'Dalits need Marxism', it means they are not saying what they believe in.

Another category of educated Dalits say that 'Marxists always repeat the parrot like words, 'exploitation of labour' and 'surplus value'. If talking about exploitation of labour is parrot like speech then will their recitation of the term 'Caste'! 'Caste'! 'Caste'! not be a parrot like word? What will these people—know about society? What will they know even about caste?

Persons, however good they may be, cannot understand either their

own situation or the situation of fellow human beings when they do not have proper understanding of labour relations.

Those Dalits—who do not know anything about classes and who are able to receive higher education, get higher grade jobs and acquire property—will not at all be concerned with the problems of the countless poor people. Just as propertied persons in the upper castes are not concerned with the poor people of their own castes, the economically better off persons in the low castes too are not at all concerned with the poor people of their own castes. The movement for reservations does not give them such knowledge.

Owing to an improper understanding of the path of reservation, educated persons of the lower castes have developed a tremendous negative feature, namely, caste chauvinism! Because, they are able to see some advantages from reservations. They are able to get those reservations because of their castes. Hence they think that it is their task to glorify their castes.

While making use of reservations, it is inevitable to mention one's own caste in the application forms. One should not mention caste in daily life except while filling the relevant forms. One should not approve of caste distinctions. The lower caste people should dislike mentioning their caste. Elimination of that evil should be their goal.

Making use of reservations does not mean worshipping castes or to use a Telugu idiom, 'not keeping them over the head'. But the educated Dalits are not able to understand such a small point. Instead of feeling intense agony and angry about being Malas and Madigas, they proudly declare, "I am a Mala! I am a Madiga!" They are treating 'humiliation' as 'felicitation'. This means, totally in an upside down manner! In other words, a reverse of what should happen! The understanding and the sense of self-respect of the Dalit activists with regard to the caste system is in such a pathetic situation!

All this will make the upper caste people happy in many ways. As the low caste people have not acquired a class outlook, they won't take even a glance of the properties of the upper castes. There is no risk for exploiters from such low caste people. This is the first cause for the happiness of the propertied class.

The activists of low castes are glorifying their own castes and consider it as an idea to retain their castes. Malas as Malas, Madigas as Madigas, Rajakas as Rajakas, Yadavas as Yadavas...thus, the lower castes people are looking at their castes with admiration and are overwhelmed with joy. Because of this type of activists—who do not have the objective of not

observing castes—caste system will remain in tact for ever. This is the second reason for the happiness of upper caste people.

If reservations continue to exist, the votes of lower castes will surely go to the parties of upper caste propertied classes. This is the third reason for the happiness of propertied classes. They may have many more such kinds of happiness.

Since Ambedkar kept the lower castes away from the class outlook and since the activities of these castes hold many wrong conceptions, the benefit which the upper castes and propertied classes get has no limit.

Some of the stupid fellows in upper castes, without understanding all this, are annoyed of reservations. They become furious and shout, 'how long will these reservations continue?' They do so because they are not aware of many uses of continuation of reservations.

The clever government of India keeps on extending the period of reservations for its own benefit. If it is smart, it should make reservations permanent. The educated persons in the lower castes will totally be satisfied by permanent reservations. They treat their castes as their wealth, make their castes permanent and get assimilated into them. Any way they don't have the perspective of property rights. What more do the upper castes and propertied classes need?

But, what should have Ambedkar taught the Dalits?

What should have Ambedkar realized as a representative of poor castes? What should he have taught the Dalits? He should have taught them that reservations are the most trivial and temporary means and class struggle is the highest and permanent means. He should have taught them, 'Reservations give temporary relief. Continuing this path for a long time is continuing the caste system for a long time. It is not possible to abandon castes as long as reservations continue. Rejection of castes should be our aim. Hence, retaining reservations for a longer time amounts to doing harm to ourselves. The permanent solution for liberating ourselves from our problems is class struggle against exploitation. That is Marxism. This is our path of liberation! Follow the path of class struggle while making use of reservations! This alone is the path which we have to follow!'

But Ambedkar did not do like this. Those people did not receive such knowledge from this leader.

All that the Dalits received from Ambedkar is 'slavery of reservations and religious obscurantism'.

Whatever be the form of religious obscurantism, the solution is logic and materialism!

The solution for caste distinction is Castelessness and non-observance of caste!

The solution for poverty is class struggle against exploitation of labour! The class struggle that continues until exploitative division of labour is changed! Establishing equality!

But, the Dalits received none of these solutions from Ambedkar.

Because '**Untouchability**' is the most crucial problem, any reformer who fights against that evil will receive boundless love and affection of the people.

Ambedkar received them abundantly from people since he moulded his struggle against Untouchability into a **movement for reservations.**

Moreover, **his studies abroad at a very young age** brought him heaps of fame. The people of the colonies will have excessive glamour for the studies in the capitalist countries—though those degrees do not give any new knowledge!

Another factor that raised Ambedkar's reputation was his **fight with Gandhi!**

All the reasons combined together, increased excessive cult of individual of Ambedkar and made him above 'examination'.

Ambedkar can abuse Gandhi (whom many Hindus admire) with any sort of words like: 'puerile and insincere', 'ambitious politician', 'cunning' and so on! But, one cannot criticise Ambedkar for any thing, even if he commits any number of blunders and any kind of blunders. This is the rule of Dalit intellectuals with regard to the cult of the individual. But this fascist trend is highly damaging to (or to use a Telugu metaphor, it is a blow of an axe) the interests of the Dalits.

Any individual or a theory should stand test and pass it. If leaders commit mistakes knowingly or unknowingly their followers should correct them. It does not amount to disrespecting the leaders. Therefore, the Dalit people should realise certain things.

1. Buddhism is also like other religions in respect of social relations. It also supports 'exploitation of labour'. Hence, we have to reject Buddhism too. We have to acquire a rationalist outlook concerning nature and society.

2. We should never mention caste on any occasion except while filling application forms. Non-observance of caste should be our aim.

3. We should realise that Marxism is the right and permanent solution in the context of inequality and domination in our lives. We have to learn that theory.

4. From the preaching of a teacher or a leader, we have to accept the correct things and reject the incorrect ones. We should not tolerate right and wrong in the same way. Whether it is love or respect, we should not be indiscriminate.

5. When we come across any teacher, any philosopher, or any theory at any place in the world, we should examine what it says concerning labour relations, property rights, riches, and poverty. We have to understand on which side that teaching stands. If we don't understand this, we can not understand any thing in society. We cannot protect ourselves.

Well finally what, then, is Ambedkar?

Concerning educated persons like Ambedkar who was born in the Working Class, received education, learnt languages but one who could not understand the interests of the Working Class, Marx made an observation. It is worth citing in this context:

> **"The more a ruling class is able to assimilate the foremost minds of a ruled class, the more stable and dangerous becomes its rule"**
>
> (Capital, vol. 3, p. 601. Moscow edition, 1971).

Ambedkar is an educated person who assimilated himself willingly in the ruling class!

A misled intellectual!

THE END

THE BLUNT WEAPON OF UNTOUCHABILITY!

[The serialization of my essay in Andhra Jyoti weekly, began in December 1999 and ended in November 2000. In September 2000, an article on Marx and Ambedkar appeared in a column titled "Diary of a Dalit", in **Vaartha**, a Telugu daily. In response to this article, I wrote the following article which appeared in Vaartha. As the theme of my article is concerned with the 'Dalit' Question, I am giving it here.]

In his **"Diary of a Dalit"** ('Vaartha', dt. 12-9-2000), **Chandra Bhan Prasad** has shown both Marx's economic agenda and Ambedkar's agenda and appealed to the readers to understand how superior the agenda of Ambedkar is. He made this appeal in response to those who argue that Ambedkar does not have an economic agenda. "I am putting before you both Marx's agenda and Ambedkar's agenda. You decide for yourself whether Ambedkar has an economic agenda or not". This is how he has assigned the responsibility to the readers.

According to Prasad's details, Marx's scheme has the following points: 'All kinds of hereditary rights over all properties should be abolished. All citizens must perform labour". Though Prasad has shown many more points, these two are enough for the purpose of our present discussion.

What is the essence of Marx's economic agenda? Removal of exploitation of labour.

A class in society has been living by means of exploitation without doing any labour for hundreds and thousands of years. That class has occupied 'land', 'money' and 'capital' as its private properties. It has been extracting rent in the name of land-right, interest in the name of right over money and profit in the name of right over capital. All these incomes are in fact parts of labour that the labouring class performs. This means, the class that does not perform labour is living by exploiting the class that performs labour! This has been taking place since the days of slavery to the present time in all the countries of the world.

Explaining all this Marx says, 'The class of labourers has to liberate themselves by means of its struggle against the class of owners. It has to bring all the properties of owners under the collective right without paying any compensation.

The labouring class has to change the conditions in such a way that the exploiting class too performs labour. Every person should live by means of his own labour instead of others' labour.

Now, according to Prasad's own presentation, Ambedkar's economic agenda or scheme consists of the following points: The State should buy lands of the landlords and industries of the capitalists by paying compensation. The State has to issue Debentures to all those property owners and pay interest annually. The State itself should organize those lands and industries.— This is the essence of Ambedkar's economic agenda.

Here, there is no condition that all persons should perform labour. This scheme implies that property owners should live by taking interest and without doing labour as before. All the properties of the property owners will now become 'money'! On that money, interest comes from the State. This means, the income which the landlords used to get in the name of 'rent' in the past will now come in the name of 'interest'. All those property owners now live on interest just as they lived earlier on rent, interest or profit. Both are same. This is nothing but change of the form of property rights. What is the source from which the state pays interest to all these property owners? Where else does it get from? From the class of labourers. This is how it pays: The State rents out to people the lands which it purchased, doesn't it? The rent which these tenants pay to the State should be adequate to pay interest on the debentures of landlords. Similarly, the amount which the workers in the industry pay to the State would be such that it is enough to pay interest to the debenture holders! This means, even through Ambedkar's scheme, all these property owners will live on the labour of the labourers without doing labour for themselves as before. How long, do you think, that these property rights of receiving interest on debentures can continue? Ambedkar did not say either that this is only a temporary arrangement or these property rights should be removed. He said that these debentures shall be "inheritable". Which means, these property rights will remain for generations: from one generation of children to another! The families of debenture-holders will go on receiving interest for generations! Until the world vanishes! This is the new economic scheme which Ambedkar showed to mankind! Chandra Bhan Prasad put this scheme before readers and said to them, 'Look, how great agenda this is!'

After presenting the schemes of both Marx and Ambedkar, Prasad said, "Above all, what we have to note is that these two persons

suggested the same kind of policy. Both are wishing that properties and enterprises should be under the control of State".

Both Marx and Ambedkar had suggested the same policy concerning property, observes Prasad! What should we call an observation such as this!

While one person suggested the path of eliminating the exploitation of labour, another suggested the inheritance of property rights so that one can live on exploitation. Showing such contradictory paths, Prasad comments that 'the two paths are the same! Both persons said the same thing!' Which means, he doesn't know either view! He doesn't know debentures, interest and inheritable rights. He knows nothing. If both are identical, what is the need of the second path when the first path already exists? The second person (Ambedkar) too should support the first one (Marx).

Those who don't like to understand 'exploitation of labour' and who don't have serious anger will find a great person even among those who defend *interest* and *exploitative property rights*!

Prasad further says, 'Both Marx and Ambedkar said the same thing, didn't they? Then, why do people who wish to bring about a novel change in the country reject Ambedkar and salute only Marx? Why are they ignoring Ambedkar?

Salutation to Marx since he rejected exploitation of labour. Rejection of Ambedkar since he supported property rights! Those who do not understand the concept of exploitation of labour and remain favourable to the exploiting class cannot understand this point!

Ambedkar too, on one occasion, compared Buddha and Marx and commented: 'some people say that Buddha's theory is pessimistic. Why don't they ask the same question with reference to Marx's theory?' Exactly in the same manner, now Prasad also asks, 'When they salute Marx, why do they ignore Ambedkar?' How can the disciple understand what the teacher could not understand, unless he is a 'disciple who excels the teacher'? For a Dalit intellectual who cannot understand what Marx said and Ambedkar said is not the same, moreover they are contradictory to each other, it appears as if all the upper caste people are doing a lot of injustice to Ambedkar. For Prasad also, it appeared so.

However a great person an untouchable is, the upper caste people do not accept that great person as a hero or a leader, says Prasad. They

didn't respect Ambedkar precisely for this reason, argues Prasad. We greatly admire this disciple who refers to Ambedkar even today as an Untouchable! This is the weapon which the Dalit intellectuals use time and again. By using this expression unreasonably every now and then, they are making it so blunt that it becomes totally useless.

If some one does not try to understand the actual basis for others' criticism of Ambedkar and argues that 'they are criticizing Ambedkar because he is a Dalit', this means he is treating 'Untouchability' as a means to escape from criticism! But this is a stupid way! A most useless means! A means that will sink the person much deeper into the criticism!

I know many 'non-Dalits' who admire Ambedkar a lot. As regards to myself, I used to admire him a lot; 'worship' him a lot. But after learning about 'exploitation of labour' and after realizing that Ambedkar is favourable to the exploiting class, the whole admiration evaporated. Can those who understood what exploitation is treat the supporter of exploitation as a 'great personality? Can they still admire such a personality?

The criticism against Ambedkar is not because he is an Untouchable. It is because he is in favour of the exploiting class. Because he is opposed to Marxism. Hence the criticism against him!

Coming back to the question whether Ambedkar had an economic agenda or not , he had it once in order to submit it to the Constituent Assembly. It was an agenda that supports exploitation. Ambedkar's reputation can remain a little, if his disciples don't mention his economic agenda rather than mentioning it.

Ambedkar himself did not ever mention his agenda again which he prepared in the form of a memorandum in 1947. He abandoned his economic agenda and began to preach Buddha's Ashtanga Marga. Of course, the two are favourable to exploitation! Hence, Ashtanga Marga appealed to Ambedkar more than his own economic agenda.

Since Ambedkar was favourable to the exploitation of labour, all his Dalit disciples too took the same path and 'turned their faces away' from Marxism. It is such a stupid path that makes them incapable of knowing whether they are doing good or harm to themselves!

(From 'Vaartha', Telugu daily, dt. 30-9-2000).

For the solution of the 'Caste' question...

The world needs the theory that is powerful enough to illuminate the path. It is irrelevant whether that theoretician is Buddha, Marx, Ambedkar or someone else. That which remedies the disease alone is a medicine! That which emancipates from sufferings alone is the higher path. If it is Buddhism, we are obliged to follow it, to revere it. The question, however, is to ascertain which is the higher path! This is the thing, which we must ascertain. We are obliged to follow the thing which we ascertain to be the higher path.

When we come across any teacher, any philosopher, or any theory at any place in the world, we should examine what it says concerning labour relations, property rights, riches, and poverty. We have to understand on which side that teaching stands. If we don't understand this, we cannot understand any thing in society. We cannot protect ourselves.

From the preaching of a teacher or a leader, we have to accept the correct things and reject the incorrect ones. We should not tolerate right and wrong in the same way. Whether it is love or respect, we should not be indiscriminate.